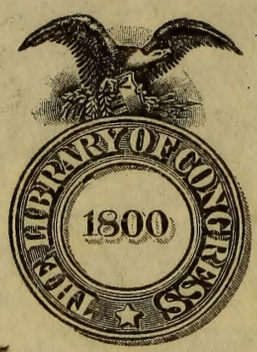

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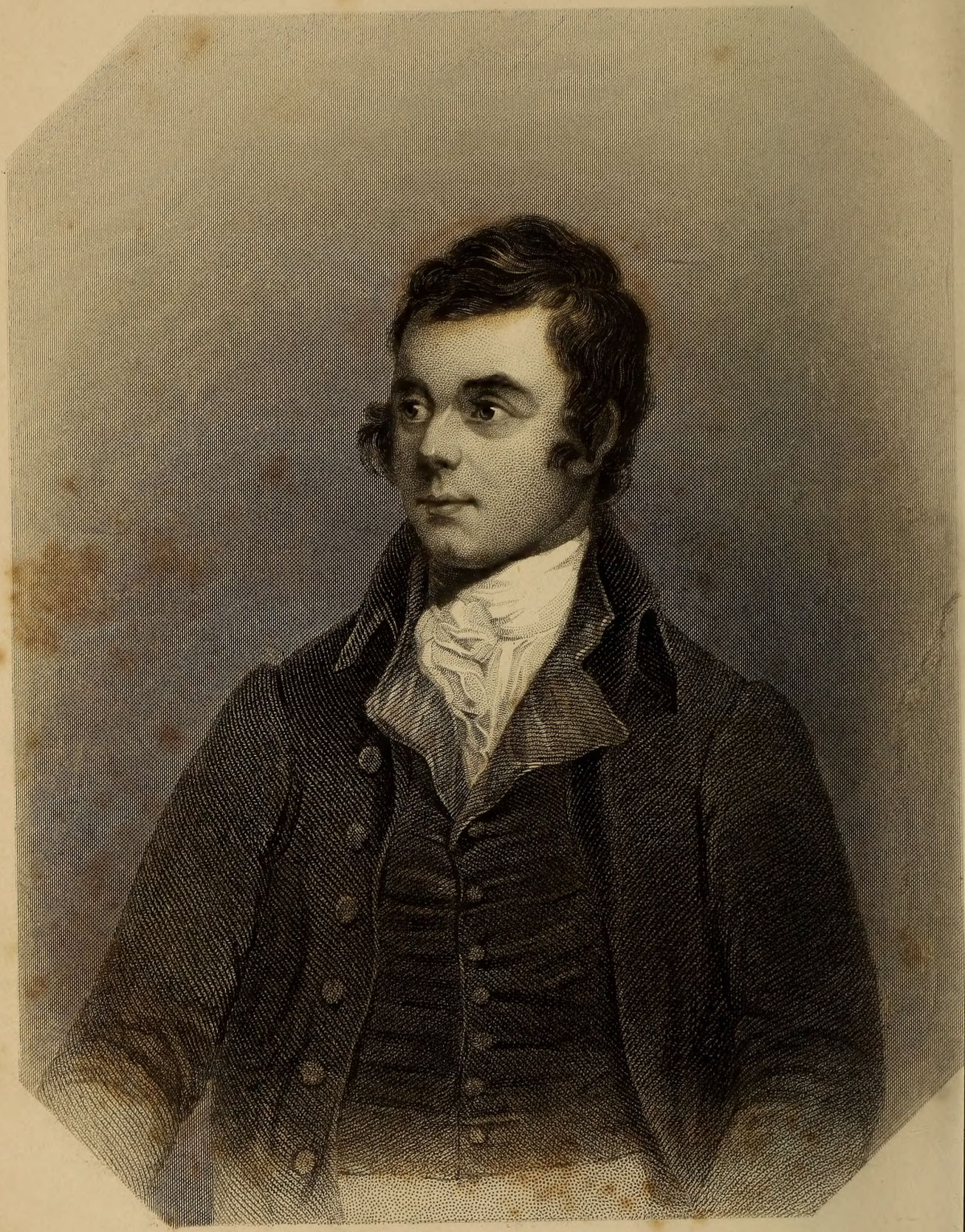

Robert Burns — Poet

THE

WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS,

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

With Life by

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

London,

HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN,

1842.

TO

ROBERT WALLACE, ESQ.

OF KELLY,

M.P. FOR GREENOCK, &c. &c. &c.

THIS

UNIQUE EDITION OF THE

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

IS,

WITH PERMISSION, MOST

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY HIS

OBEDIENT SERVANT

THE EDITOR.

David Hutcheson.

THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

WITH LIFE

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM,

AND NOTES BY

GILBERT BURNS,	CROMEK,	T. LANDSEER,
LORD BYRON,	ALLAN CUNNINGHAM,	LOCKHART,
THOMAS CAMPBELL,	DR. CURRIE,	MOTHERWELL,
THOMAS CARLISLE,	HAZLITT,	SIR WALTER SCOTT,
ROBERT CHAMBERS,	JAMES HOGG,	PROFESSOR WILSON
COWPER,	LORD JEFFREY,	WORDSWORTH,
&c.	&c.	&c.

Farewell, High Chief of Scottish song!
That couldst alternately impart
Wisdom and rapture in thy page,
And brand each vice with satire strong;
Whose lines are mottoes of the heart,
Whose truths electrify the sage:—

Farewell! and ne'er may envy dare
To wring one baleful poison-drop
From the crush'd laurels of thy bust;
But while the lark sings sweet in air,
Still may the grateful pilgrim stop
To bless the spot that holds thy dust!

CAMPBELL.

New Edition.

LONDON:
HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1845.

LONDON:

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

OF

THE LIFE OF BURNS.

With something of hope and fear, I offer this work to my country. I have endeavoured to relate the chequered fortunes, delineate the character, and trace the works of the Illustrious Peasant with candour and accuracy: his farming speculations—excise schemes—political feelings and poetic musings—are discussed with a fulness not common to biography: and his sharp lampoons and personal sallies are alluded to with all possible tenderness to the living, and respect for the dead. In writing the Poet's life I have availed myself of his unpublished journals—private letters, manuscript verses, and of well-authenticated anecdotes and traits of character supplied by his friends; and I have arranged his works as much as might be in the order of their composition, and illustrated them with such notes, critical, historical and biographical, as seemed necessary. Of verse, one hundred and odd pieces will be found in this edition, which are not in Currie's octavos. The number of letters, too, is materially increased—but nothing is admitted which bears not the true Burns' stamp.

A. C.

Belgrave-Place,
January 1, 1834.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

When this Memoir and chronological Edition of the works of Burns were first announced, a friend observed that the learned part of the world, he was afraid, might think they had enough of the Peasant Poet already, and look coldly on any attempt to associate him in beauty of embellishment and elegance of exterior with bards

"Far seen in Greek, deep men of letters."

"My chief dread is," I replied, "that my labours in the cause of the Poet may not be acceptable: I have no fear for Burns—he will take care of himself." It has not happened otherwise with the Poet than I anticipated: nor have my own exertions been, it appears, unwelcome: six thousand copies of the Life have been disposed of, and a new edition is called for: I now give it to the world, with some of the errors in the first edition corrected, and all such new intelligence added as seemed useful and characteristic.

A. C.

Belgrave-Place,
September, 1835.

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[Recent account of Clarinda—Note] . . *ib.*

BURNS.

His genius was universal. In satire, in humour, in pathos, in description, in sentiment, he was equally great: but his satire and his humour partake of the soil whence they sprung. They are rude, forceful, and manly: they are not polished into elegance, nor laboured into ease; but in every composition I am inclined to regard him as one of the few geniuses who arise to illuminate the hemisphere of mind. Education had nothing in the formation of his character; what he wrote was the pure offspring of native genius: and if we reflect how excellent he was in all; what various powers he has shewn in paths that are amongst the highest of poetical delineation; we may, without much offence to justice, place him by the side of the greatest names this country has produced.

Thornhill's Virgil, p. 443.

CHRONOLOGY

OF

BURNS'S LIFE AND WORKS.

1759.

January 25.—Born in a clay-built cottage, raised by his father's own hands, on the banks of the Doon, in the district of Kyle, and county of Ayr. A few days after his birth a wind arose, that crushed the frail structure, and the unconscious Poet was carried unharmed to the shelter of a neighbouring house.

1765.—(ætat 6.)

Sent by his father to a school at Alloway Miln—taught by one Campbell—same year placed under the care of Mr. Murdoch.

1766.—(7.)

May 25.—His father removes to the farm of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr, leased him by Mr. Ferguson, of Doonholm.

1768.—(9.)

In the absence of Murdoch, he is taught arithmetic in the winter evenings by his father, who instructs him also in the knowledge of History and Geography. On hearing Murdoch read the tragedy of Titus Andronicus, he is so shocked at the recital that he threatens to burn the book.

1769.—(10.)

The latent seeds of poetry cultivated in his mind by an old woman who resides in the family, and who had the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, witches, warlocks, apparitions, giants, enchanted towers, &c. The recital of these had so strong an effect on his imagination that for ever afterwards, in his nocturnal rambles, he kept a sharp look out in suspicious places.

1772.—(13.)

Sent to the Parish School of Dalrymple, for improvement in penmanship. Resumes his studies with Murdoch, in the town of Ayr. Revises his Grammar, and acquires a knowledge of French. Attempts the Latin, but makes little progress.

1773.—(14.)

Forms several connexions with other younkers, who possess superior advantages, but who never insult the *clouterly* appearance of his plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of the seasons. They give him stray volumes of books, and one (the late Sir John Malcolm), whose heart, not even the *Munny Begum* scenes have tainted, helped him to a little French. Parting with these young friends, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often a sore affliction, but he is soon called to more serious evils. His father's farm proves a ruinous bargain, and, to clench the misfortune, he falls into the hands of a scoundrelly factor, who afterwards sat for the picture he drew of one in his *Tale of The Twa Dogs*. He becomes a dexterous ploughman for his age, but his indignation boils at the insolent threatening letters of the factor, which sets the family all in tears.

1774.—(15.)

Is the principal labourer in his father's farm—suffers great depression of spirits—is afflicted with head-ache in the evenings—forms his first attachment for Nelly Blair, *a bonnie sweet sonsie lass*, the tones of whose voice makes his heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp. Composes his first song in praise of his *Handsome Nelly*.

1775.—(16.)

A Collection of Songs, his *vade mecum*—these he pores over, while driving his cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noting the true tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. To this practice he owes much of his critic craft. Hitherto, he was, perhaps, the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* less acquainted with the ways of the world.

1776.—(17.)

He goes to a country dancing school to give his manners a brush, strongly against the wish of his father, who was subject to strong passions, and, from that instance of disobedience, took a sort of dislike to him, which, he believes, was one cause of the apparent dissipation which marked his succeeding years—the great misfortune of his life was to want an aim—the only two openings by which he can enter the temple of fortune are the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. A constitutional melancholy makes him fly solitude, and he becomes a welcome guest wherever he visits—his greatest impulse is *un penchant pour l'adorable moitié du genre humain*—his heart is completely tinder, and eternally lighted up by some goddess or other. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, he fears no competitor, and spends his evenings after his own heart. His zeal, curiosity, and intrepid dexterity, recommend him as a confidant in all love adventures, and he is in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton.

1777.—(18.)

May 25.—His father removes to the farm of Lochlea. The young poet composes the ballad "My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border;" and the best of all his songs—"It was upon a Lammas night."

1778.—(19.)

Spends his nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast at a noted school in Kirkoswald, where he learns mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., but makes a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. He falls in occasionally with the smugglers, and learns to fill his glass and mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet he goes on with a high hand with his geometry, till the sun enters Virgo, a month always a carnival in his bosom, when a charming *fillette*, who lives next door to the school, oversets all his trigonometry, and sets him off at a tangent from the sphere of his studies. Returns home considerably improved—engages several of his schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence—pores over a collection of Letters of the Wits of Queen Anne's reign.

1779.—(20.)

Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle, his sole principles of action—*Tristram Shandy* and the *Man of Feeling* his favourite books. Poetry the darling walk of his mind—usually half-a-dozen or more pieces on hand. His passions now rage like so many devils, till they find vent in rhyme. Composes "Winter, a Dirge," the eldest of his printed pieces—The Death of poor Mailie, John Barleycorn, and several songs.

1780.—(21.)

November.—Forms, in conjunction with Gilbert, and seven or eight young men, a Bachelors' Club, in Tarbolton, the rules of which he afterwards draws up—the declared objects are—relaxation from toil—the promotion of sociality and friendship, and the improvement of the mind.

1781.—(22.)

Midsummer.—Partly through whim, and partly that he wishes to set about doing something in life, he joins a flax-dresser in Irvine, of the name of Peacock, a relation of his mother—where he spends six months learning the trade.

December 27.—Writes a remarkable letter to his father, in which he states that the weakness of his nerves has so debilitated his mind that he dares neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity. He is quite transported at the thought that ere long, perhaps very soon, he shall bid adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for he is heartily tired of it, and, if he does not very much deceive himself, he could contentedly and gladly resign it. He concludes by saying, "My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more."

December 31.—His shop accidentally catches fire, as he is giving a welcome carousal to the new year, and is burned to ashes, and, like a true poet, he is left without a sixpence.

1782.—(23.)

The clouds of misfortune gather thick round his father's head; and he is visibly far gone in consumption. To crown the distresses of the poet, a *belle fille*, whom he adores, and who had pledged her soul to meet him in the field of matrimony, jilts him, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. His constitutional melancholy is now increased to such a degree that for three months he is in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—*depart from me, ye accursed!* He forms a friendship with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune, whose mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. He was the only man he ever saw who was a greater fool than himself, where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto he had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did him a mischief, and the consequence was, that soon after he resumed the plough, he wrote "The Poet's Welcome to his Illegitimate Child." Meeting with *Fergusson's Scottish Poems*, he strings anew his wildly-sounding lyre.

1783.—(24.)

April.—Commences his Common Place Book, entitled: "Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry, &c. By Robert Burness; a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it."

June 21.—Writes to his cousin, James Burness, that his father is in a dying condition; and sends, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for his welfare and happiness—He becomes a Free Mason, being his first introduction to the life of a boon companion.

1784.—(25.)

January.—Writes his "First Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet," in which he alludes to his *Darling Jean*. The first idea of his becoming an Author started on this occasion.

February 13.—Death of his Father; whose all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of Justice—He makes shift to collect a little money in the family; and he and his brother Gilbert take the neighbouring farm of Mossgiel, on which he enters with a full resolution, *Come, go to, I will be wise!*—He reads farming books, calculates crops, attends markets; and, in spite of *the devil, the world, and the flesh*, he believes he would have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest, they lost half their crops. This overset all his wisdom, and he returns, *like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*. He now begins to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes, and the first of his poetic offspring that saw the light was *The Holy Tuilzie* or *Twa Herds*, a burlesque sham imitation of a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in his *Holy Fair*. *Holy Willie's Prayer* next makes its appearance, and alarms the Kirk-session so much that they hold several meetings, to look over their spiritual artillery. Unluckily for him, his wanderings lead him on another side, within point blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to his printed poem, *The Lament*. He is compelled to perform penance in church—inveighs against the clergyman for rebuking him—writes his "Epistle to Rankine" and his song "The Ranting Dog the Daddie o't."

1785.—(ætat 26.)

Espouses the cause of Gavin Hamilton against the Auld Light Fanatics; and produces, in succession, *The Kirk's Alarm*, *The Ordination*, *The Holy Fair*, &c.—His *Address to the Deil*, and *Death and Doctor Hornbook*.

April 1—21. Writes his *Epistles to Lapraik*, and, in the course of the year, *Halloween*, *The Jolly Beggars*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, and various songs.

1786.—(27.)

March 20.—Encloses Mr. Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, his *Scotch Drink*, with a wish that the ——— may follow, with a blessing, for his edification.

April 3.—Writes to Mr. Aiken that his proposals for publishing by subscription, he is just going to send to press, and signs his name, for the last time—*Burness*.

April 20.—Encloses Mr. John Kennedy, his Mountain Daisy (entitled in the MS. The Gowan), as being the very latest of his productions, and composed while holding the plough.—His connexion with his bonny Jean - She presents him with Twins—Anger of her father—The distress of the Poet—Performs penance a second time in the Kirk for his incontinency—Is called upon to find security for the maintenance of his children—Is unable to raise the money, and the alternative is expatriation, or a jail—Prefers the former.

August 1.—Publishes the first Edition of his Poems—Realizes above 20*l*., and takes out his passage for Jamaica—Composes the last song he believes he shall ever measure in Caledonia, "The Gloomy Night is gathering fast;" when a letter from Dr. Blacklock fortunately arrives, which overthrows all his schemes, by opening new prospects to his poetic ambition. His poems everywhere received with rapture—Cultivates friendship with Professor Dugald Stewart, Dr. Blair, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Gregory, Mrs. Dunlop, &c.—Visits Katrine, the seat of Dugald Stewart, where he meets Lord Daer, and Mrs. Stewart of Stair, whom he celebrates in his Song, *Flow gently, sweet Afton*—Composes the Lass of Ballochmyle, and forwards the Song to the heroine, Miss Alexander—Is treated by her with coldness, which he resents with bitterness.

November 28.—Arrives in Edinburgh.

1787.—(28.)

January 7.—Writes to Gavin Hamilton that he feels a miserable blank in his heart, from the want of his bonnie Jean. "I don't think," he says, "I shall ever meet with so delicious an armful again. She has her faults; but so have you and I; and so has everybody."

January 14.—Attends a Grand Masonic Lodge, &c.—Received with acclamation as the Bard of Caledonia—Resides with his friend Richmond, in the house of Mrs. Carfrae, Lawnmarket, in a single room, at the rent of 3*s*. a week—Meets the Duchess of Gordon, and his conversation *completely carries her off her feet*.

April 4.—Publishes the second Edition of his Poems, of which 3000 copies are subscribed for—Commences his second Common Place Book.

May 6.—Sets out on a Border Tour, in company with Robert Ainslie, Esq.—Presented by the Magistracy of Jedburgh with the freedom of the town—his reception every where triumphant.

May 13.—Visits Dryburgh Abbey, and spends an hour among the ruins, since hallowed by the dust of Scott.

June 8.—Returns to Mossgiel—The family of his bonnie Jean now court his society—Returns to Edinburgh, where he obtains permission to erect a tombstone over the grave of Fergusson. The architect was two years in completing it, and the Poet was two years in paying him; for which they are quits. "He had," says the Poet, "the *hardiesse* to ask for interest on the sum, but considering that the money was due by one Poet, for putting a tombstone over another, he may with grateful surprise, thank heaven that ever he saw a farthing of it." Proceeds on his first Highland Tour, by way of Stirling, to Inverary—Visits the Harvieston ladies, and becomes acquainted with Miss Chalmers.

July.—Spends this month at Mossgiel—Writes his Epistle to Willie Chalmers.

August.—Re-visits Stirling-shire, in company with Dr. Adair of Harrowgate—Visits the ruined Abbey of Dunfermline—Kneels down and kisses with sacred fervour the stone which covers the grave of Robert Bruce—Shewn at Linlithgow the room where the beautiful and injured Mary Queen of Scots was born—Crosses the Forth, and arrives in Edinburgh.

August 25.—Sets out on his third and last Highland Tour, in company with his friend Nicol—Visits the Duke and Duchess of Gordon—Dines with them, and forgets his friend Nicol, who, in a foaming rage, induces the Poet reluctantly to turn his back on *bonnie Castle Gordon*, with a vexation he was unable to conceal.

September 16.—Arrives once more in Edinburgh, having travelled 600 miles in 22 days—Composes verses on Loch Turit, and Bruar Water—Forms an intimacy with Clarinda—Is overturned in a hackney-coach, by a drunken coachman; and is confined to his room for six weeks with a bruised limb—Writes his celebrated Letters to Clarinda—Contributes numerous Songs to Johnson's Musical Museum.

December 30.—Writes to his friend Brown that Almighty love still reigns in his bosom; and that he is at this moment ready to hang himself for a young Edinburgh *Widow*. (She turns out to be a married lady, whose husband is absent in Jamaica.)

December 31.—Attends a Grand Dinner to celebrate the birth of Prince Charles Stuart, and produces an Ode on the occasion.

1788.—(29.)

March 30.—Composes (partly on horseback) The Chevalier's Lament.

April 13.—Settles with his Publisher, Creech, and receives upwards of 600*l*., as the produce of his Second Edition—Advances 200*l*. to assist his brother Gilbert; but, when afterwards solicited to become bail for him to a considerable amount, he is compelled to decline in justice to his family.

May 25.—Takes the farm of Ellisland.

August 3.—Marries his bonnie Jean, and contributes many of his best Songs to the Museum.

1789.—(30.)

July.—Receives an Epistle, part Poetic and part prosaic, from a young Poetess, Miss Janet Little, which he does not well know how to answer, being no dab at fine-drawn letter-writing.

September.—Writes the noblest of all his ballads, "To Mary in Heaven," Lines on Friar's-Carse Hermitage, &c.

October 16.—Contends for the prize of "The Whistle," at Friars Carse—Drinks bottle for bottle in the Contest, and celebrates the occasion by a Poem.

December 20.—Writes to Provost Maxwell that his poor distracted mind is so torn, so jaded, so racked and bedevilled with the task of the superlatively damned, to make *one guinea do the work of three*, that he detests, abhors, and swoons at, the very name of business.

1790.—(31.)

January 25.—Communicates to Mrs. Dunlop some interesting particulars of the life and death of Falconer, the unfortunate author of the Shipwreck—Finds his farm a ruinous affair—His "nerves in a cursed state," and a horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul—Resumes his intercourse with the Muse, and writes in November his inimitable Tam o' Shanter, the best of all his productions—Is appointed to the Excise—Has an adventure with Ramsay of Ochtertyre.

1791.—(32.)

April 11.—Birth of a third son—Becomes a member of the Dumfries Volunteers, and their Poet Laureate—Writes several patriotic Songs, and his "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled"—Fires off his "Five Carlines," and other Political Squibs, and satirizes both Whigs and Tories—Visited in the summer by two English gentlemen, who dine with him, and partake freely of his Whiskey Punch—They forget the flight of time; lose their way on returning to Dumfries, and can scarcely count its three steeples, although assisted by the morning dawn.

August 25.—Sells his crop at a guinea an acre above value—A strange scene of drunkenness on the occasion—About 30 people engaged in a regular battle, every man for his own hand, and fight it out for three hours—In-doors folk lying drunk on the floor, and decanting until his dogs get so tipsy by attending them that they can't stand—Enjoys the scene—Relinquishes Ellisland, and removes to Dumfries—Is invited by the Earl of Buchan to assist at the coronation of the bust of Thomson, on the 23rd of September—Apologizes, but sends an Ode for the occasion—Presented by Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable with a valuable snuff-box, on the lid of which is a miniature of Mary Queen of Scots, as an acknowledgment for his "Lament" of that ill-starred Princess.

1792.—(33.)

February 27.—Puts himself at the head of a party of soldiers, and captures, sword in hand, a French Smuggler—Communicates to Francis Grose, Esq., the celebrated Antiquary, three remarkable Witch Stories relating to Alloway Kirk.

September.—Commences his celebrated Correspondence with George Thomson, and composes for his Collection of Scottish Songs upwards of one hundred and twenty of the finest lyrics in the language.

September 10.—Writes a remarkable letter to his friend Alexander Cunningham, in which he gives him his ideas of the conjugal state. "Ah, my friend! matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be!"

December 8.—Birth of his Daughter.

1793.—(34.)

Publishes a Fourth Edition of his Poems, in 2 vols.—Makes an excursion through Galloway and the neighbouring country, in company with Syme of Ryedale, the same who related to Sir Walter Scott his story of The Sword Cane—Continues pouring forth his beautiful Songs to the Museum of Johnson—Admonished by the Excise that his business is *to act*, not to *think*, in allusion to his political opinions—Rejects the offer of an Annuity of 50*l*. to write Poetical Articles for the Morning Chronicle.

December.—Writes to Mr. Macmurdo that he does not owe a shilling to either man or woman.

1794.—(35.)

February 25.—Writes to Alexander Cunningham commencing with these words:—"Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?" and stating that for two months he has been unable to wield the pen.

May.—Publishes a Fifth Edition of his Poems, finally corrected with his own hand.

At Midsummer he removes from the Bank Vennel, Dumfries, to Mill Hill Brae.

June 25.—Writes to Mrs. Dunlop from a solitary inn, in a solitary village, in Castle Douglas, that he is in poor health, and that he is afraid he is about to suffer for the follies of his youth.—His medical friends threaten him with a flying gout, but he trusts they are mistaken.

1795.—(36.)

January.—Writes his manly song "For a' that and a' that."

In the Autumn he loses his only daughter—Writes his Heron Ballads.

In November he is visited by Professor Walker, who spends two days with him, and writes a description of the Poet's appearance.

December 29.—Writes to Mrs. Dunlop that he already begins to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast over his frame.

1796.—(37.)

January 31.—Becomes the victim of a severe Rheumatic Fever—Rack'd with pain—Every face he meets with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam: "Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy me Israel.'—Implores his friends in Edinburgh to make interest with the Board of Excise to grant him his full Salary—His application refused!

July 5.—Affecting interview with Mrs. Riddel at Brow.

July 7.—Writes to his friend Cunningham:—"I fear the voice of the Bard will soon be heard among you no more! You actually would not know me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair—My spirits fled, fled!"—Goes to Brow for the benefit of sea air.

July 12.—Writes to George Thomson for Five Pounds, and to his cousin James Burness for Ten Pounds, to save him from the horrors of a jail!—Sends his last letter to Mrs. Dunlop, stating that, in all probability, he will speedily be beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns*.

July 18.—Returns to Dumfries in a dying state—His good humour is unruffled, and his wit never forsakes him. He looks to one of his brother Volunteers with a smile, as he stood weeping by his bedside, and says, "John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me!"

July 21.—His Death.

July 25.—His remains removed to the Town Hall of Dumfries, where they lie in state, and his funeral takes place on the following day.

J. C.

THE

LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

PART I.—AYR-SHIRE.

The national poetry of Scotland, like her thistle, is the offspring of the soil. To the poems of our first James, the strains of forgotten minstrels, or the inspiration of shepherds and husbandmen, its origin has been ascribed. Where proof cannot be procured, we must be content with conjecture: classic or foreign lore can claim no share in the inspiration which comes from nature's free grace and liberality. From whatever source our poetry has sprung, it wears the character and bears the image of the north: the learned and the ignorant have felt alike its tenderness and humour, dignity and ardour; and both have united in claiming, as its brightest ornament, the poetry of Him of whose life and works I am now about to write. This, however, has already been done with so much affection by Currie, care by Walker, and manliness by Lockhart—the genius, the manners, and fortunes of Burns have been discussed so fully by critics of all classes, and writers of all ranks, that little remains for a new adventurer in the realms of biography, save to extract from the works of others a clear and judicious narrative. But, like the artist who founds a statue out of old materials, he has to re-produce them in a new shape, touch them with the light of other feeling, and inform them with fresh spirit and sentiment.

Robert Burns, eldest son of William Burness and Agnes Brown his wife, was born Jan. 25, 1759, in a clay-built cottage, raised by his father's own hands, on the banks of the Doon, in the district of Kyle, and county of Ayr. The season was ungentle and rough, the walls weak and new:—some days after his birth a wind arose which crushed the frail structure, and the unconscious Poet was carried unharmed to the shelter of a neighbouring house. He loved to allude, when he grew up, to this circumstance; and ironically to claim some commiseration for the stormy passions of one ushered into the world by a tempest. This rude edifice is now an ale-house, and belongs to the shoemakers of Ayr: the recess in the wall, where the bed stood in which he was born, is pointed out to inquiring guests: the sagacious landlord remembers, too, as he brings in the ale, that he has seen and conversed with Burns, and ventures to relate traits of his person and manners. There is nothing very picturesque about the cottage or its surrounding grounds; the admirers of the Muses' haunts will see little to call romantic in low meadows, flat enclosures, and long lines of public road. Yet the district, now emphatically called "The land of Burns," has many attractions. There are fair streams, beautiful glens, rich pastures, picturesque patches of old natural wood; and, if we may trust proverbial rhyme, "Kyle for a man" is a boast of old standing. The birth of the illustrious Poet has caused the vaunt to be renewed in our own days.

The mother of Burns was a native of the county of Ayr; her birth was humble, and her personal attractions moderate; yet, in all other respects, she was a remarkable woman. She was blest with singular equanimity of temper; her religious feeling was deep and constant; she loved a well-regulated household; and it was frequently her pleasure to give wings to the weary hours of a chequered life by chanting old songs and ballads, of which she had a large store. In her looks she resembled her eldest son; her eyes were bright and intelligent; her perception of character, quick and keen. She lived till Jan. 14, 1820, rejoiced in the fame of the Poet, and partook of the fruits of his genius.

His father was from another district. He was the son of a farmer in Kincardine-shire, and born in the year 1721, on the lands of the noble family of Keith-Marischall. The retainer, like his chief, fell into misfortunes; his household was scattered, and William Burness, with a small knowledge of farming, and a large stock of speculative theology, was obliged to leave his native place, in search of better fortune, at the age of nineteen. He has been heard to relate with what bitter feelings he bade farewell to his younger brother, on the top of a lonely hill, and turned his face toward the border. His first resting-place was Edinburgh, where he obtained a slight knowledge of gardening: thence he

went into Ayr-shire, and procured employment first from Crawford of Doonside, and second, in the double capacity of steward and gardener, from Ferguson of Doonholm. Imagining now that he had established a resting-place, he took a wife, Dec. 1757, leased a small patch of land for a nursery, and raised that frail shealing, the catastrophe of which has already been related.

During his residence with the laird of Doonholm, a rumour was circulated that William Burness had fought for our old line of princes in the late rebellion, the fatal 1745. His austere and somewhat stately manners caused him to be looked upon as a man who had a secret in reserve, which he desired to conceal; and, as a report of that kind was not calculated for his good, he procured a contradiction from the hand of the clergyman of his native parish, acquitting him of all participation in the late "wicked rebellion." I mention this, inasmuch as the Poet, speaking of his forefathers, says, "they followed boldly where their leaders led," and hints that they suffered in the cause which crushed the fortunes of their chief. Gilbert Burns, a sensible man, but no poet, imagined he read in his brother's words an imputation on the family loyalty, and hastened to contradict it, long after his father had gone where the loyal or rebellious alike find peace. He considered his father's religious turn of mind, and the certificate of his parish minister, as decisive: and so they are, as far as regards William Burness; but the Keiths-Marischall were forfeited before he was born, and the Poet plainly alludes to earlier matters than the affair of the "Forty-five."—"My ancestors," he says, "rented lands of the noble Keiths-Marischall, and had the honour of sharing their fate. I mention this circumstance because it threw my father on the world at large." Here he means that the misfortunes of the fathers were felt by the children; he was accurate in all things else, and it is probable he related what his father told him. The feelings of the Poet were very early coloured with Jacobitism.

Though William Burness sought only at first to add the profits of a small stewardship to those of a little garden or nursery, and toiled along with his wife to secure food and clothing, his increasing family induced him to extend his views; and he accordingly ventured to lease Mount Oliphant, a neighbouring farm of a hundred acres, and entered upon it in 1765, when Robert was between six and seven years old. The elder Burns seems to have been but an indifferent judge of land: in a district where much fine ground is in cultivation, he sat down on a sterile and hungry spot, which no labour could render fruitful. He had commenced, too, on borrowed money; the seasons, as well as the soil, proved churlish; and Ferguson his friend dying, "a stern factor," says Robert, "whose threatening letters set us all in tears," interposed; and he was compelled, after a six years' struggle, to relinquish the lease. This harshness was remembered in other days: the factor sat for that living portrait of insolence and wrong in the "Twa Dogs." How easily may endless infamy be purchased!

From this inhospitable spot William Burness removed his household to Lochlea, a larger and better farm, some ten miles off, in the parish of Tarbolton. Here he seemed at once to strike root and prosper. He was still strong in body, ardent in mind, and unsubdued in spirit. Every day, too, was bringing vigour to his sons, who, though mere boys, took more than their proper share of toil; while his wife superintended, with care and success, the whole system of in-door economy. But it seemed as if fortune had determined that nought he set his heart on should prosper. For four years, indeed, seasons were favourable, and markets good; but, in the fifth year, there ensued a change. It was in vain that he laboured with head and hand, and resolved to be economical and saving. In vain Robert held the plough with the dexterity of a man by day, and thrashed and prepared corn for seed or for sale, evening and morning, before the sun rose and after it set. "The gloom of hermits, and the unceasing moil of galley slaves," were endured to no purpose; and, to crown all, a difference arose between the tenant and his landlord, as to terms of lease and rotation of crop. The farmer, a stern man, self-willed as well as devoutly honest, admitted but of one interpretation to ambiguous words. The proprietor, accustomed to give law rather than receive it, explained them to his own advantage; and the declining years of this good man, and the early years of his eminent son, were embittered by disputes, in which sensitive natures suffer and worldly ones thrive.

Amid all these toils and trials, William Burness remembered the worth of religious instruction, and the usefulness of education in the rearing of his children. The former task he took upon himself, and in a little manual of devotion still extant, sought to soften the rigour of the Calvinistic creed into the gentler Arminian. He set, too, the example which he taught. He abstained from all profane swearing and vain discourse, and shunned all approach to levity of conversation or behaviour. A week-day in his house wore the sobriety of a Sunday; nor did he fail in performing family worship in a way which enabled his son to give the world that fine picture of domestic devotion, the "Cotter's Saturday Night." The depressing cares of the world, and a consciousness, perhaps, that he was fighting a losing battle, brought an almost habitual gloom to his brow. He had nothing to cheer him but a sense of having done his duty. The education of his sons he confided to other hands. At first he sent Robert

to a small school at Alloway Miln, within a mile of the place of his birth; but the master was removed to a better situation, and his place was supplied by John Murdoch, a candidate for the honours of the church, who undertook, at a moderate salary, to teach the boys of Lochlea, and the children of five other neighbouring farmers, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and Latin. He was a young man, a good scholar, and an enthusiastic instructor, with a moderate knowledge of human nature, and a competent share of pedantry. He made himself acceptable to the elder Burness by engaging in conversations on speculative theology, and in lending his learning to aid the other's sagacity and penetration; and he rendered himself welcome to Robert by bringing him knowledge of any kind—by giving him books—telling him about eminent men—and teaching him the art—which he was not slow in learning—of opening up fresh sources of information for himself.

Of the progress which Robert made in knowledge, his teacher has given us a very clear account. In reading, writing and arithmetic, he excelled all boys of his own age, and took rank above several who were his seniors. The New Testament, the Bible, the English Grammar, and Mason's collection of verse and prose, laid the foundation of devotion and knowledge. As soon as he was capable of understanding composition, Murdoch taught him to turn verse into its natural prose order; sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words, and to supply all the ellipses. By these means he perceived when his pupil knew the meaning of his author, and thus sought to instruct him in the proper arrangement of words, as well as variety of expression. For some two years and a half, Robert continued to receive the instructions of his excellent teacher under his father's roof. On Murdoch's nomination to the Grammar School of Ayr, his pupil did not forsake him, but took lodgings with him; and, during the ordinary school hours, walks in the evening, and other moments of leisure, he sought to master the grammar, in order to take upon himself the task of instructing his brothers and sisters at home. Under the same kind instructor he strove to obtain some knowledge of French. "When walking together, and even at meals," says Murdoch, "I was constantly telling him the names of different objects, as they presented themselves, in French, so that he was hourly laying in a stock of words, and sometimes little phrases. In short, he took such pleasure in learning, and I in teaching, that it was difficult to say which of the two was most zealous in the business; and about the end of our second week of study of the French, we began to read a little of the Adventures of Telemachus, in Fenelon's own words." All the French which the young Poet picked up, during one fortnight's course of instruction, could not be much; the coming of harvest called him to more laborious duties; nor did he, save for a passing hour or so, ever seriously resume his studies in Telemachus.

Of these early and interesting days, during which the future man was seen, like fruit shaping amid the unfolded bloom, we have a picture drawn by the Poet's own hand, and touched off in his own vivid manner. —"At seven years of age I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety*—I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and, by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was the vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning,

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord!"

I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my ear—

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung,
High on the broken wave."

I met with these in Mason's English collection, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two I have read since, were the Life of Hannibal, and the History of the Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest."

The education of Burns was not over when the school-doors were shut. The peasantry of Scotland turn their cottages into schools; and when a father takes his arm-chair by the evening fire, he seldom neglects to communicate to his children whatever knowledge he possesses himself. Nor is this knowledge very limited; it extends, generally, to the history of Europe, and to the literature of the island; but more particularly to the divinity, the poetry, and what may be called the traditionary history of Scotland. An intelligent peasant is intimate with all those skirmishes, sieges, combats, and quarrels, domestic or national, of which public writers take no account. Genealogies of the chief families are quite familiar to him. He has by heart, too, whole volumes of songs and ballads; nay, long poems sometimes abide in

[* Idiot, for idiotic. CURRIE.]

his recollection; nor will he think his knowledge much, unless he knows a little about the lives and actions of the men who have done most honour to Scotland. In addition to what he has on his memory, we may mention what he has on the shelf. A common husbandman is frequently master of a little library: history, divinity, and poetry, but most so the latter, compose his collection. Milton and Young are favourites; the flowery Meditations of Hervey, the religious romance of the Pilgrim's Progress, are seldom absent; while of Scottish books, Ramsay, Thomson, Fergusson, and now Burns, together with songs and ballad-books innumerable, are all huddled together, soiled with smoke, and frail and tattered by frequent use. The household of William Burness was an example of what I have described; and there is some truth in the assertion that in true knowledge the Poet was, at nineteen, a better scholar than nine-tenths of our young gentlemen when they leave school for the college.

Let us look into this a little more closely; nor can we see with a clearer light than what Burns himself has afforded us.—"What I knew of ancient story," he observes, "was gathered from Salmon and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature and criticism, I got from the Spectator. These, with Pope's Works, some plays of Shakspeare, Tull, and Dickson on Agriculture, the Heathen Pantheon, Locke on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener's Dictionary, Boyle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditations, had formed the whole of my reading." But when to these we add Young's Night Thoughts, which his own poems prove him to have admired, we cannot see that we have advanced far on the way in which he walked, when he disciplined himself for the service of the Scottish muse. In truth, none of the works we have enumerated, save the poems of Allan Ramsay, could be of farther use to him than to fill his mind with information, and shew him what others had done. The "Address to the Deil," "Highland Mary," and "Tam o' Shanter" are the fruit of far different studies

Burns had, in truth, a secret school of study, in which he set up other models for imitation than Pope or Hervey.—"In my infant and boyish days," he observes to Doctor Moore, "I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family (Jenny Wilson by name), remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs, concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poesie; but had so strong an effect upon my imagination that to this hour in my nocturnal rambles I sometimes keep a look-out in suspicious places." Here we have the Poet taking lessons in the classic lore of his native land and profiting largely; yet, to please a scholar like his correspondent, he calls his instructress an ignorant old woman, and her stories idle trumpery. Let the name of Jenny Wilson be reverenced by all lovers of the northern muse; her tales gave colour and character to many fine effusions. The supernatural in these legends was corrected and modified by the natural which his growing sense saw in human life and found in the songs of his native land.—"The collection of songs," he says, "was my *vade-mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noting the true tender or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is." He is rarely if ever wrong in his remarks on the songs of Scotland. They had, in no remote day, the advantages of the schooling which in these early hours he gave his fancy and understanding.

He had not yet completed these unconscious studies. In his farther progress his mother was his instructress. Her rectitude of heart, and the fine example of her husband, made an impression too strong to be ever effaced from the mind of her son. This was strengthened by the songs and ballads which she commonly chanted; they all wore a moral hue. The ballad which she loved most to sing, or her son to hear, is one called "The Life and Age of Man." It is a work of imagination and piety, full of quaintness and nature; it compares the various periods of man's life to the months of the year; and the parallel is both ingenious and poetic.—"I had an old grand-uncle," says Burns, "with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years: the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of 'The Life and Age of Man.'" The mother of the Poet, on being questioned respecting it by Cromek, some years before her death, repeated the ballad word for word, saying it was one of the many nursery songs of her mother, and that she first heard and learned it from her seventy years before. The noble poem of "Man was made to mourn," bears a close resemblance to this old strain, both in language and sentiment. It taught Burns the art, which too few learn, of adding a moral aim to his verse; and though he rose in song to the highest pitch of moral pathos and sublimity, he took his first lesson from this now neglected ballad. In all his letters and memoranda, we

see him continually pointing to the rustic productions with which he was in youth familiar, and thus affording us in some measure the means of knowing how little of his excellence is reflected from others, and how much we owe to his own inspiration.

A student in art first studies the works of earlier masters; as he advances, living figures are placed before him, that he may see nature with his own eyes. Burns, who knew nothing of academic rules, pursued a similar course in poetry. He had become acquainted with limb and lineament of the muse as she had been seen by others: he could learn no more from the dead, and now had recourse to the living: he had hitherto looked on in silence; it was now time to speak. Beauty first gave utterance to his crowding thoughts; with him love and poetry were coevals. "You know," he says, in his communication to Moore, "our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom, 'she was a bonnie sweet sonsie lass.' In short, she altogether, unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and bookworm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. You medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours—why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Eolian harp—and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a country laird's son, on one of his father's maids with whom he was in love: and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he—for, excepting that he could smear sheep and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself. Thus with me began love and poetry." This intercourse with the softer and gentler part of the creation—this feeling in the presence of youth and loveliness, and desire to give voice to his passion in song—were, to his slumbering emotions, what the voice in scripture was among the "dry bones of the valley," calling them into life and action. It is true that his brother looked upon some of the ladies of these early verses as so many moving broomsticks on which fancy hung her garlands. They seemed otherwise to the Poet. He saw charms in them which prosaic spirits failed to see. We would take the word of the muse in such matters against a whole battalion of men,

> "Who, darkling, grub this earthly hole
> In low pursuit."

Having given, as he said, his "heart a heeze" among those soft companions, the Poet, like the picker of samphire on the beetling cliff, proceeded to seek farther knowledge in a perilous place—*viz.* among the young and the heedless—"the ram-stam squad, who zigzag on," without any settled aim or a wish ungratified. He offended his father, by giving his "manners a brush," at a country dancing-school. The good man had no sincere dislike, as some Calvinists have, to this accomplishment; still he tolerated rather than approved of it; he did not imagine that religion took to the barn-floor,—

> "And reel'd, and set, and cross'd, and cleekit;"

cracking her thumbs and distorting, as Milton says, her "clergy climbs," to the sound of a fiddle; dancing, in short, he shook his head at, though he did not frown. The Poet felt, therefore, that in this he had approached at least to disobedience—a circumstance which he regrets in after-life, and regards as the first step from the paths of strictness and sobriety. "The will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim" began, he says, to be almost the sole lights of his way; yet early-ingrained piety preserved his innocence, though it could not keep him from folly. "The great misfortune of my life," he wisely observes, "was to want an aim. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it; the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance. Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark—a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited; or any great wonder that always where two or three met together,

there was I among them. Another circumstance in my life, which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school,* to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made pretty good progress. But I made greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry till the sun entered Virgo—a month which is always a carnival in my bosom—when a charming fillette, who lived next door to the school, upset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies."

[The following additional particulars, respecting this period of his life, will be found interesting to every admirer of the Poet. They were collected by Mr. Robert Chambers, and appeared originally in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*:—

"If Burns be correct in stating that it was his nineteenth summer which he spent in Kirkoswald parish, the date of his residence there must be 1777. What seems to have suggested his going to Kirkoswald school was the connection of his mother with that parish. She was the daughter of Gilbert Brown, farmer of Craigenton, in this parochial division of Carrick, in which she had many friends still living, particularly a brother, Samuel Brown, who resided, in the miscellaneous capacity of farm-labourer, fisherman, and dealer in wool, at the farm-house of Ballochneil, above a mile from the village of Kirkoswald. This Brown, though not the farmer or guidman of the place, was a person held to be in creditable circumstances, in a district where the distinction between master and servant was, and still is, by no means great. His wife was the sister of Niven, the tenant; and he lived in the "Chamber" or better portion of the farm-house, but was now a widower. It was with Brown that Burns lived during his attendance at Kirkoswald school, walking every morning to the village where the little seminary of learning was situate, and returning at night.

The district into which the young poet of Kyle was thus thrown has many features of a remarkable kind. Though situated on the shore of the Firth of Clyde, where steamers are every hour to be seen on their passage between enlightened and busy cities, it is to this day the seat of simple and patriarchal usages. Its land, composed of bleak green uplands, partly cultivated and partly pastoral, was, at the time alluded to, occupied by a generation of primitive small farmers, many of whom, while preserving their native simplicity, had superadded to it some of the irregular habits, arising from a concern in the trade of introducing contraband goods on the Carrick coast.† Such dealings did not prevent superstition from flourishing amongst them in a degree of vigour of which no district of Scotland now presents any example. The parish has six miles of sea-coast; and the village, where the church and school are situate, is in a sheltered situation about a couple of miles inland.

The parish schoolmaster, Hugh Rodger, enjoyed great local fame as a teacher of mensuration and geometry, and was much employed as a practical land-surveyor. On the day when Burns entered at the school, another youth, a little younger than himself, also entered. This was a native of the neighbouring town of Maybole, who, having there completed a course of classical study, was now sent by his father, a respectable shopkeeper, to acquire arithmetic and mensuration under the famed mathematician of Kirkoswald. It was then the custom, when pupils of their age first entered a school, to take the master to a tavern, and complete the engagement by treating him to some liquor. Burns and the Maybole youth, accordingly, united to regale Rodger with a potation of ale, at a public-house in the village, kept by two gentlewomanly sort of persons named Kennedy—Jean and Anne Kennedy—the former of whom was destined to be afterwards married to immortal verse, under the appellation of *Kirkton Jean*, and whose house, in consideration of some pretensions to birth or style above the common, was always called "the Leddies' House." From that time, Burns and the Maybole youth became intimate friends, insomuch that, during this summer, neither had any companion with whom he was more frequently in company than the one with the other. Burns was only at the village during school hours; but when his friend Willie returned to the paternal dome on Saturday nights, the poet would accompany him, and stay till it was time for both to come back to school on Monday morning. There was also an interval between the morning and afternoon meetings of the school, which the two youths used to spend together. Instead of amusing themselves with ball or any other sport, like the rest of the scholars, they would

* This was the school of Kirkoswald.

† "This business was first carried on here from the Isle of Man, and afterwards to a considerable extent from France, Ostend, and Gottenburg. Persons engaged in it found it necessary to go abroad, and enter into business with foreign merchants; and, by dealing in tea, spirits, and silks, brought home to their families and friends the means of luxury and finery at the cheapest rate."—*Statist. Account of Kirkoswald*, 1794.

take a walk by themselves in the outskirts of the village, and converse on subjects calculated to improve their minds. By and bye, they fell upon a plan of holding disputations, or arguments on speculative questions, one taking one side, and the other the other, without much regard to their respective opinions on the point, whatever it might be, the whole object being to sharpen their intellects. They asked several of their companions to come and take a side in these debates, but not one would do so; they only laughed at the young philosophers. The matter at length reached the ears of the master, who, however skilled in mathematics, possessed but a narrow understanding and little general knowledge. With all the bigotry of the old school, he conceived that this supererogatory employment of his pupils was a piece of absurdity, and he resolved to correct them in it. One day, therefore, when the school was fully met, and in the midst of its usual business, he went up to the desk, where Burns and Willie were sitting opposite to each other, and began to advert in sarcastic terms to what he had heard of them. They had become great debaters, he understood, and conceived themselves fit to settle affairs of importance, which wiser heads usually let alone. He hoped their disputations would not ultimately become quarrels, and that they would never think of coming from words to blows; and so forth. The jokes of schoolmasters always succeed amongst the boys, who are too glad to find the awful man in any thing like good humour to question either the moral aim or the point of his wit. They therefore, on this occasion, hailed the master's remarks with hearty peals of laughter. Nettled at this, Willie resolved he would "speak up" to Rodger; but first he asked Burns, in a whisper, if he would support him, which Burns promised to do. He then said that he was sorry to find that Robert and he had given offence;—it had not been intended. And indeed he had expected that the master would have been rather pleased, to know of their endeavours to improve their minds. He could assure him that such improvement was the sole object they had in view. Rodger sneered at the idea of their improving their minds by nonsensical discussions, and contemptuously asked what it was they disputed about? Willie replied that, generally, there was a new subject every day; that he could not recollect all that had come under their attention; but the question of to-day had been—"Whether is a great general or a respectable merchant the most valuable member of society?" The dominie laughed outrageously at what he called the silliness of such a question, seeing there could be no doubt for a moment about it. "Well," said Burns, "if you think so, I shall be glad if you take any side you please, and allow me to take the other, and let us discuss it before the school." Rodger most unwisely assented, and commenced the argument by a flourish in favour of the general. Burns answered by a pointed advocacy of the pretensions of the merchant, and soon had an evident superiority over his preceptor. The latter replied, but without success. His hand was observed to shake; then his voice trembled; and he dissolved the school in a state of vexation pitiable to behold. In this anecdote, who can fail to read a prognostication of future eminence to the two disputants? The one became the most illustrious poet of his country; and it is not unworthy of being mentioned, in the same sentence, that the other advanced, through a career of successful industry in his native town, to the possession of a large estate in its neighbourhood, and some share of the honours usually reserved in this country for birth and aristocratic connection.

The coast, in the neighbourhood of Burns's residence at Ballochneil, presented a range of rustic characters upon whom his genius was destined to confer an extraordinary interest. At the farm of Shanter, on a slope overlooking the shore, not far from Turnberry Castle, lived Douglas Graham, a stout hearty specimen of the Carrick farmer, a little addicted to smuggling, but withal a worthy and upright member of society, and a kind-natured man. He had a wife named Helen M'Taggart, who was unusually addicted to superstitious beliefs and fears. The *steading* where this good couple lived is now no more, and the farm has been divided for the increase of two others in its neighbourhood; but genius has given them a perennial existence in the tale of Tam o' Shanter, where their characters are exactly delineated under the respective appellations of Tam and Kate. * * *

At Ballochneil, Burns engaged heartily in the sports of leaping, dancing, wrestling, *putting* (throwing) the stone, and others of the like kind. His innate thirst for distinction and superiority was manifested in these, as in more important, affairs; but though he was possessed of great strength, as well as skill, he could never match his young bedfellow John Niven. Obliged at last to acknowledge himself beat by this person in bodily warfare, he had recourse for amends to a spiritual mode of contention, and would engage young Niven in an argument about some speculative question, when, of course, he invariably floored his antagonist. His satisfaction on these occasions is said to have been extreme. One day, as he was walking slowly along the street of the village, in a manner customary with him,—his eyes bent on the ground, he was met by the Misses Biggar, the daughters of the parish pastor. He would have passed without noticing them, if one of the young ladies had not called him by name. She then rallied

him on his inattention to the fair sex, in preferring to look towards the inanimate ground, instead of seizing the opportunity afforded him, of indulging in the most invaluable privilege of man, that of beholding and conversing with the ladies. "Madam," said he, "it is a natural and right thing for man to contemplate the ground, from whence he was taken, and for woman to look upon and observe man, from whom she was taken." This was a conceit, but it was the conceit of "no vulgar boy."

There is a great fair at Kirkoswald in the beginning of August—on the same day, we believe, with a like fair at Kirkoswald in Northumberland, both places having taken their rise from the piety of one person, Oswald, a Saxon king of the heptarchy, whose memory is probably honoured in these observances. During the week preceding this fair, in the year 1777, Burns made overtures to his Maybole friend, Willie, for their getting up a dance, on the evening of the approaching festival, in one of the public-houses of the village, and inviting their sweethearts to join in it. Willie knew little at that time of dances or sweethearts; but he liked Burns, and was no enemy to amusement. He therefore consented, and it was agreed that some other young men should be requested to join in the undertaking. The dance took place, as designed, the requisite music being supplied by a hired band; and about a dozen couples partook of the fun. When it was proposed to part, the reckoning was called, and found to amount to eighteen shillings and fourpence. It was then discovered that almost every one present had looked to his neighbours for the means of settling this claim. Burns, the originator of the scheme, was in the poetical condition of not being master of a single penny. The rest were in the like condition, all except one, whose resources amounted to a groat, and Maybole Willie, who possessed about half-a-crown. The last individual, who alone boasted any worldly wisdom or experience, took it upon him to extricate the company from its difficulties. By virtue of a candid and sensible narration to the landlord, he induced that individual to take what they had, and give credit for the remainder. The payment of the debt is not the worst part of the story. Seeing no chance from begging or borrowing, Willie resolved to gain it, if possible, by merchandise. Observing that stationery articles for the school were procured at Kirkoswald with difficulty, he supplied himself with a stock from his father's warehouse at Maybole, and for some weeks sold pens and paper to his companions, with so much advantage, at length, that he realised a sufficient amount of profit to liquidate the expense of the dance. Burns and he then went in triumph to the inn, and not only settled the claim to the last penny, but gave the kind-hearted host a bowl of thanks into the bargain. Willie, however, took care from that time forth to engage in no schemes for country dances without looking carefully to the probable state of the pockets of his fellow adventurers.

Burns, according to his own account, concluded his residence at Kirkoswald in a blaze of passion for a fair *fillette* who lived next door to the school. At this time, owing to the destruction of the proper school of Kirkoswald, a chamber at the end of the old church, the business of parochial instruction was conducted in an apartment on the ground floor of a house in the main street of the village, opposite the church-yard. From behind this house, as from behind each of its neighbours in the same row, a small stripe of kail-yard (*Anglice*, a kitchen-garden) runs back about fifty yards, along a rapidly ascending slope. When Burns went into the particular patch behind the school to take the sun's altitude, he had only to look over a low enclosure to see the similar patch connected with the next house. Here, it seems, Peggy Thomson, the daughter of the rustic occupant of that house, was walking at the time, though more probably engaged in the business of cutting a cabbage for the family dinner, than imitating the flower-gathering Proserpine, or her prototype Eve. Hence the bewildering passion of the poet. Peggy afterwards became Mrs. Neilson, and lived to a good age in the town of Ayr, where her children still reside.

At his departure from Kirkoswald, he engaged his Maybole friend and some other lads to keep up a correspondence with him. His object in doing so, as we may gather from his own narrative, was to improve himself in composition. "I carried this whim so far," says he, "that, though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger." To Willie, in particular, he wrote often, and in the most friendly and confidential terms. When that individual was commencing business in his native town, the poet addressed him a poetical epistle of appropriate advice, headed with the well-known lines from Blair's Grave, beginning

> "Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul,
> Sweetener of life and solder of society."

This correspondence continued till the period of the publication of the poems, when Burns wrote to request his friend's good offices in increasing his list of subscribers. The young man was then possessed of little influence; but what little he had, he exercised with all the zeal of friendship, and with no ittle success. A considerable number of copies were accordingly transmitted in proper time to

his care, and soon after, the poet came to Maybole to receive the money. His friend collected a few choice spirits to meet him at the King's Arms Inn, and they spent a happy night together. Burns was on this occasion particularly elated, for Willie, in the midst of their conviviality, handed over to him above seven pounds, being the first considerable sum of money the poor bard had ever possessed. In the pride of his heart, next morning, he determined that he should not walk home, and accordingly he hired from his host a certain poor hack mare, well known along the whole road from Glasgow to Portpatrick—in all probability the first hired conveyance that Poet Burns had ever enjoyed, for even his subsequent journey to Edinburgh, auspicious as were the prospects under which it was undertaken, was performed on foot. Willie and a few other youths who had been in his company on the preceding night, walked out of town before him, for the purpose of taking leave at a particular spot; and before he came up, they had prepared a few mock-heroic verses in which to express their farewell. When Burns rode up, accordingly, they saluted him in this formal manner, a little to his surprise. He thanked them, however, and instantly added, "What need of all this fine parade of verse? It would have been quite enough if you had said—

Here comes Burns,
On Rosinante;
She's d—— poor,
But he's d—— canty."

The company then allowed Burns to go on his way rejoicing.]"*

Nature, in all this, resumes Mr. Cunningham, was pursuing her own plan in the education of Burns. The melancholy of which he complains was a portion of his genius; the invisible object to which he was impelled was poetry. No one can fail to perceive, in the scenes which he describes as dear to his heart and fancy, the very materials over which his muse afterwards breathed life and inspiration; and no one can fail to feel, that all this time he had been walking in the path of the muse without knowing it.

He complains that he was unfitted with an aim. He looked around, and saw no outlet for his ambition. Farming he failed to find the same as it is in Virgil—elegance united with toil. The high places of the land were occupied, and no one could hope to ascend save the titled or the wealthy. The church he could not reach without an expensive education, or patronage less attainable still. Law held out temptation to talent, but not to talent without money; while the army opened its glittering files to him who could purchase a commission, or had, in the words of the divine,

"A beauteous sister, or convenient wife,"

to smooth the way to preferment. With a consciousness of genius, and a desire of distinction, he stood motionless, like a stranded vessel whose sails are still set, her colours flying, and the mariners a-board. He had now and then a sort of vague intimation from his own heart that he was a poet; but the polished and stately versification of English poetry alarmed and dismayed him: he had sung to himself a song or two, and stood with his hand on the plough, and his heart with the muse. The strength which he could not himself discover was not likely to be found out by others. It is thus we find him spoken of by his good old kind preceptor:—"Gilbert," says Murdoch, "always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit, than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church music. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice untuneable. It was long before I could get him to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said—

"Mirth, with thee I mean to live;"

and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys had been asked which of them was most likely to court the muses, he would surely never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind." The simple schoolmaster had perhaps paid court to some small heritor's daughter, and dressed his face in smiles for the task; he accordingly thought that the Muse was to be wooed and won in the same Malvolio way, and never imagined that the face inspired with contemplation and melancholy could be dear to her heart.

While the boy was thus rising into the man,

[* "All this pleasantry was not without its bitter. The poet's Maybole frend, on inspecting the volume, was mortified to find the poetical epistle which had been addressed to him, printed with the name *Andrew* substituted for his own, and the motto from Blair, as was but proper, omitted. He said nothing at the time; but, young, ambitious, and conscious of having done all in his humble power for friendship's cause, he could not forgive so marked a slight. He therefore from that time ceased to answer Burns's letters. When the poet was next at Maybole, he asked the cause, and Willie answered by inquiring if he could not himself divine it. He said he thought he could, and adverted to the changed name in the poem. Mr. Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, had been, he said, a useful friend and patron to him. He had a son commencing a commercial life in Liverpool. I thought, he said, that a few verses addressed to this youth would gratify his father, and be accepted as a mark of my gratitude. But, my muse being lazy, I could not well make them out. After all, this old epistle occurred to me, and by putting his name into it, in place of yours, I made it answer this purpose. Willie told him in reply that he had just exchanged his friendship for that of Mr. Aiken, and requested that their respective letters might be burnt—a duty which he scrupulously performed on his own part. The two disputants of Kirkoswald never saw or corresponded with each other again."]

and the mind was expanding with the body, both were in danger of being crushed, as the daisy was, in the Poet's own immortal strains, beneath the weight of the furrow. The whole life of his father was a continued contest with fortune. Burns saw, as he grew up, to what those days of labour and nights of anxiety would lead, and set himself, with heart and hand, to lighten the one, and alleviate the other. At the plough, scythe, and reaping hook, he feared no competitor, and so set all fears of want in his own person at defiance: he felt but for his father. All this is touchingly described by Gilbert. "My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in thrashing the crop of corn, and, at fifteen, was the principal labourer on the farm; for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt, at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old—for he was now above fifty, broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances—these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evening with a dull head-ache, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed in the night-time." The elder Burness, while in the Lothians, had paid attention to gardening; but he could not bring much agricultural knowledge from his native county. His toil was incessant; but it was of the body, not of the brain. More is required in farming than mere animal vigour and dexterity of hand. A skilful farmer may be called a learned man; —to work according to the season, and in the spirit of the soil; to anticipate sunshine, and be prepared for storms; to calculate chances and consequences; suit demands at home, and fit markets abroad; require what not many fully possess.

I know not how much of this knowledge William Burness possessed. He was, however, fertile in expedients: when he found that his farm was unproductive in corn, he thought the soil suitable for flax, and resolved himself to raise the commodity, while to the Poet he allotted the task of manufacturing it for the market. To accomplish this, it was necessary that he should be instructed in flax-dressing: accordingly, at Midsummer, 1781, Robert went to Irvine, where he wrought under the eye of one Peacock, kinsman to his mother. His mode of life was frugal enough. "He possessed," says Currie, "a single room for his lodging, rented, perhaps, at the rate of a shilling a week. He passed his days in constant labour as a flax-dresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal sent to him from his father's family." A picture of his situation and feelings is luckily preserved of his own drawing: the simplicity of the expression, and pure English of the style, are not its highest qualities. He thus wrote to his father:—"Honoured Sir:—I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on new year's day: but work comes so hard upon us that I do not choose to be absent on that account. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity: for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I *glimmer* a little into futurity: but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable, employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasinesses, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it: and, if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

"As for this world," he continues, "I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late." This letter is dated Dec. 27, 1781. No one can mistake the cause of his melancholy: obscure toil and an undistinguished lot on earth directed his thoughts in despair to another world, where the righteous "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." To plough, and sow, and reap were poetic labours, compared with the dusty toil of a flax-dresser: with the lark for his companion, and the green fields around him, his spirits rose, and he looked on himself as forming a part of creation: but when he sat down to the brake and the heckle, his spirits sank, and his dreams of ambition vanished.

Flax-dressing, in the poet's estimation, seemed any thing but the way to wealth and fame: the desponding tone of his letter was no

good augury; the catastrophe of the business is not quite in keeping with quotations from Scripture and hopes in heaven. "Partly through whim," said the bard to Moore, "and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in Irvine, to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair: as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, the shop took fire and burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence." This disaster was followed by one much more grievous. "The clouds of misfortune," says Burns, "were gathering fast round my father's head. After three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, he was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in and carried him away to 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' His all went among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of justice. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—'Depart from me, ye accursed!'" The intelligence, rectitude, and piety of William Burness were an honour to the class to which he belonged: his eminent son acknowledged, when his own intercourse with the world entitled his opinions to respect, that he had met with few who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to his father: "but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility," he added, "are disqualifying circumstances in the paths of fortune." "I remember William Burness well," said the venerable Mrs. Hunter, daughter to Ferguson of Doonholm; "there was something very gentlemanly in his manners and appearance: unfortunately for him my father died early, the estate passed into other hands, and was managed by a factor, who, it is said, had no liking for the family of Mount Oliphant."

Robert and his brother were afflicted, but did not despair; they collected together the little property which law and misfortune had spared,* and, in the year 1784, took the farm of Mossgiel, near Mauchline, consisting of 118 acres, at an annual rent of ninety pounds. Their mother superintended the dairy and the household, while the Poet and Gilbert undertook for the rest. "It was," observes the latter, "a joint concern among us: every member of the family was allowed wages for the labour performed; my brother's allowance and mine was seven pounds per annum, and his expenses never in any year exceeded his slender income. His temperance and frugality were every thing that could be wished." It is pleasing to contemplate a picture such as this.

We are now about to enter into the regions of romance. "I began," says Burns, "to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes." The course of his life, hitherto, has shewn that his true vocation was neither the plough nor the heckle. He acquired, indeed, the common knowledge of a husbandman; but that was all he knew, or cared to know, of the matter. "Farmer Attention," says the proverb, "is a good farmer all the world over:" and Burns was attentive as far as ploughing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, stacking, thrashing, winnowing, and selling, went; he did all this by a sort of mechanical impulse; but success in farming demands more. The farmer should know what is doing in his way in the world around; he must learn to anticipate demand, and, in short, to *time* every thing. But he who pens an ode on his sheep, when he should be driving them forth to pasture—who stops his plough in the half-drawn furrow, to rhyme about the flowers which he buries—who sees visions on his way from market, and makes rhymes on them—who writes an ode on the horse he is about to yoke, and a ballad on the girl who shews the whitest hands and brightest eyes among his reapers—has no chance of ever growing opulent, or of purchasing the field on which he toils. The bard amidst his ripening corn, or walking through his fields of grass and clover, beholds on all sides images of pathos or of beauty, connects them with moral influences, and lifts himself to heaven: a grosser mortal sees only so many acres of promising corn or fattening grass, connects them with rising markets and increasing gain, and, instead of rising, descends into "Mammon's filthy delve." That poetic feelings and fancies such as these passed frequently over the mind of Burns in his early days, we have his own assurance; while labour held his body, poetry seized his spirit, and, unconsciously to himself, asserted her right and triumphed in her victory.

Some obey the call of learning, and become poets; others fall, they know not how, into the company of the muse, and break out into numbers. Love was the voice which called up the poet in Burns; his Parnassus was the stubble-field, and his inspirer that fair-haired girl from whose hands he picked the thistle-stings, and delighted to walk with when but some fifteen

* [Both Robert and Gilbert speak of the total ruin of their father at the time of his death. "His all," says Robert, "went among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of justice." In order to reconcile this statement with one immediately ensuing, by Gilbert, "that Mossgiel was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family," it is necessary to add that, at the bankruptcy of William Burness, his children had, respectively, considerable claims upon his estate, on account of their services to him in the farm, which claims were preferable to those of the other creditors. They thus, with the perfect approbation of the law, and, we may add, of justice also, rescued a portion of his property from the "hell-hounds" alluded to.

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years old. The song which he made in her praise he noted down in a little book entitled "Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry, by Robert Burness; a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it." "I composed the song," he said, long afterwards, "in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and I never recollect it but my heart melts and my blood sallies." The passion which he felt failed to find its way into the verse; there is some nature, but no inspiration :—

"My Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
And what is best of a'—
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.
She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel."

These lines give little indication of future strength; his vigour of thought increased with his stature; before he was a year older, the language of his muse was more manly and bold :—

"I dream'd I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam,
List'ning to the wild birds singing
By a falling crystal stream;
Straight the sky grew black and daring,
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave,
Trees, with aged arms are warring
O'er the swelling drumlie wave."

Few of the early verses of Burns are preserved; some he himself destroyed, others were composed, but not perhaps committed to paper; while it is likely that not a few are entirely lost. In his nineteenth summer, the leisure season of the farmer, while studying mensuration at a school on the sea-coast, he met with the Peggy of one of his earliest songs. "Stepping into the garden," he says, "one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel—

"Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower."

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless." On his return home, the harvest was commenced. To the fair lass of Kirkoswald, he dedicated the first fruits of his fancy, in a strain of equal freedom and respect, beginning—

"Now wastlin' winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs on whirring wings
Amang the blooming heather;
Now waving grain wide o'er the plain
Delights the weary farmer,
And the moon shines bright when I rove at night
To muse upon my charmer."

In a still richer strain he celebrates his nocturnal adventures with another of the fair ones of the west. Burns could now write as readily as he could speak, and pour the passion which kindled up his veins into his compositions. It is thus he sings of Annie—

"I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear,
I hae been merry drinkin';
I hae been joyfu' gatherin' gear,
I hae been happy thinkin'.
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley."

He who could write such lines as these had little to learn from the muse; and yet he soon surpassed them in liquid ease of expression, and happy originality of sentiment. It is one of the delusions of his biographers that the sources of his inspiration are to be sought in English poetry; but, save an image from Young, and a word or so from Shakspeare, there is no trace of them in all his compositions. Burns read the English poets, no doubt, with wonder and delight: but he felt he was not of their school; the language of life with him was wholly different; the English language is, to a Scottish peasant, much the same as a foreign tongue; it was not without reason that Murray, the oriental scholar, declared that the English of Milton was less easy to learn than the Latin of Virgil. Any one, conversant with our northern lyrics, will know what school of verse Burns imitated when he sang of Nannie, a lass who dwelt nigh the banks of the Lugar:

"Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors and mosses many, O;
The wintry sun the day has closed
And I'll awa' to Nannie, O.

"Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she 's bonnie, O;
The opening gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O."

Such was the language in which the Poet addressed the rustic damsels of Kyle. Ladies are not very apt to be won by verse, let it be ever so elegant; they set down the person who adorns them with the lilies and the roses of imagination as a dreamer, and look around for more substantial comfort. Waller's praise made Sacharissa smile—and smile only; and another lady of equal beauty saw in Lord Byron a pale-faced lad, lame of a foot—and married a man who could leap a five-barred gate; yet Burns was, or imagined himself, beloved; he wrote from his own immediate emotions; his muse was no visionary dweller by an imaginary fountain, but a substantial

"Fresh young landart lass,"

whose charms had touched his fancy. Nor was he one of those who look high, and muse on dames nursed in velvet laps, and fed with golden spoons. "He had always," says Gilbert, "a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself; his love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure, to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivator, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her." His own words partly confirm the account of Gilbert. "My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various, sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes mortified with repulse." That his love was sometimes repulsed we have the assurance of a poem, now lost, in which, like Cowley, he had recorded his labours in the way of affection; when doors were closed against him, or the Annie or Nannie of the hour failed in their promises, he added another verse to the ballad, the o'erword of which was "So I'll to my Latin again." If he sought consolation in studying the Latin rudiments, when jilted, his disappointments in that way could not be many, for his knowledge of the language was small. In his twenty-fourth year, his skill in verse enabled him to add the crowning glory to his lyric compositions; who the lady was that inspired it we are not told, but she must have been more than commonly beautiful, or more than usually kind: as the concluding compliment might have been too much for one, he has wisely bestowed it on the whole sex. The praise of other poets fades away before it.

"There 's nought but care on every han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O!
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O!

"Auld nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O!
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O!"

One of those heroines was servant in the household of General Stewart, of Stair and Afton; Burns, during a visit with David Sillar, left, it is said, one of his songs, which was soon chanted in bower and hall, and attracted the notice of Mrs. Stewart, a lady both beautiful and accomplished, who sent for the Poet on his next visit, and by her remarks and praise confirmed his inclination for lyric verse. He afterwards alluded to these interviews in a conversation with Anna Stewart, of Afton, and said he should never forget with what trepidation of heart he entered the parlour and approached her mother: this early notice was also present to his mind in copying some of his later pieces of poetry: he addresses them—the original is now before me—to "Mrs. General Stewart, of Afton, one of his first and kindest patronesses." The progress which Burns made in the more serious kind of verse, during this lyrical fit, was not at all so brilliant; his attempts have more of the language of poetry, than of its simple force and true dignity. There are passages, indeed, of great truth and vigour, but no continued strain either to rival his after flights, or compare with the unity and finished excellence of "My Nannie, O," and "Green grow the Rashes." He had prepared himself, however, for those more prolonged efforts; nature had endowed him with fine sensibility of heart and grandeur of soul; he had made himself familiar with nature, animate and inanimate; with the gentleness of spring, the beauty of summer, the magnificence of autumn, and the stormy sublimity of winter; nor was he less so with rural man and his passions and pursuits. Though indulging in no sustained flights, he had now and then sudden bursts in which his feelings over-mastered all restraint. The following stanza, written in his twenty-fourth year, shows he had read Young, and felt the resemblance which the season of winter bore to his own clouded fortunes:—

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,
The joyless winter day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May;
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine."

"There is scarcely any earthly object," says Burns, "gives me more—I do not know that I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or a high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.'" In another mood he wrote what he called "a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification, but full of the sentiment of my heart." This ditty wants harmony and vivid force of expression: but it breathes of the old ballad:—

"My father was a farmer,
Upon the Carrick border,
And carefully he bred me up
In decency and order:

He bade me act a manly part,
Though I had ne'er a farthing,
For without an honest manly heart
No man was worth regarding."

In one of his desponding fits, when he "looked back on prospects drear," or beheld the future darkening, he wrote that Prayer, in which some have seen nothing but sentiments of contrition and submissiveness, and others a desire to lay on the Creator the blame of the follies with which he charges himself. I have heard his enemies quote the following verse with an air of triumph :—

"Thou knowest that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong,
And, listening to their witching voice,
Has often led me wrong."

Poetry had now become with Burns a darling pursuit: he had no settled plan of study, for he composed at the plough, at the harrow, and with the reaping-hook in his hand, and usually had half-a-dozen or more poems in progress, taking them up as the momentary tone of his mind suited the sentiment of the verse, and laying them down as he grew careless or became fatigued. None of the verses of those days are in existence, save the "Death of Poor Mailie," a performance remarkable for genuine simplicity of expression; and "John Barleycorn," a clever imitation of the old ballads of that name, a favourite subject with the minstrels of Caledonia. His mode of composition was singular: when he hit off a happy verse, in a random fit of inspiration, he sought for a subject suitable to its tone of language and feeling, and then completed the poem. This shows a mind full of the elements of poetry. "My passions," he said, "when once lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme, and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet."

When Burns succeeded in evoking the demon of passion by the spell of verse, he had leisure, or at least peace, for a time; but he could not be idle: he turned his attention to prose. His boyish feelings had been touched, he tells us, on reading the Vision of Mirza, and many passages in the Bible; he had read too, with attention, a collection of letters, by the wits of Queen Anne's reign. This improved his taste; and as he grew up, and correspondence was forced upon him by business or by friendship, he was pleased to see that he could express himself with fluency and ease. He thought so well of those performances that he made copies of them, and, in moments of leisure or vanity, sought, and found, satisfaction in comparing them with the compositions of his companions. He observed, he said, his own superiority. Nay, he says, he carried the whim so far that, though he had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought him as many letters, as if he had been a plodding son of the day-book and ledger. He now extended his reading to the Spectator, the Man of Feeling, Tristram Shandy, Count Fathom, and Pamela: he studied as well as read them, and endeavoured to form a prose style, uniting strength and purity. There are passages of genuine ease and unaffected simplicity in his early, as well as his later, letters; yet there is too much of a premeditated air, and a too obvious desire of showing what fine, bold, vigorous things he could say. No one, however, can peruse his prose of those days without wonder; it shows a natural vigour of mind, and a talent for observation: there are out-flashings, too, of a fiery impetuosity of spirit worthy of a genius cultivated as well as lofty, and passages of great elegance and feeling.

In his common-place book, his rhymes are accompanied with explanations in prose, and, as he commenced these insertions in April 1783, he has afforded us the means of measuring the extent of his acquirements in early life. He seemed not unconscious that he could say something worth the world's attention.—"As he was but little indebted," he said, "to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished, rustic way of life; but it may be some entertainment, to a curious observer of human nature, to see how a ploughman thinks and feels under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the modes and manners of life, operate pretty much alike on all the species."

In these compositions we may continually trace thoughts and images, which growing taste and increasing vigour enabled him, afterwards, to beautify and expand. The following passage suggested the fine stanza on happy love in the "Cotter's Saturday Night:"—"Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and wickedness it leads a young inexperienced mind into, still I think it, in a great measure, deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen, in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection."

In the same strain he traces, elsewhere, the connexion between love, music, and poetry, and points out, as a fine touch in nature, that passage in a modern love composition—

"As toward her cot he jogged along,
Her name was frequent in his song."

"For my own part," he observes, "I never had the least thought, or inclination, of turning

poet till I once got heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart." No one has accounted more happily for the passionate eloquence of his songs than he has done himself.

That he extended his views, and desired, after having sung of the maidens of Carrick and Kyle, to celebrate their streams and hills, and statesmen and heroes, we have evidence enough in other parts of his works.—"I am hurt," he says in his Memoranda, "to see the other towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c., of Scotland immortalized in song, while my dear native country, the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous, both in ancient and modern times, for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants—a country where civil, and particularly religious, liberty, have ever found their first support and their last asylum—a country, the birth-place of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen, and the scene of many important events recorded in history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious Wallace—yet we have never had one Scottish poet of any eminence to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes of Ayr, and the heathy, mountainous source and winding sweep of the Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, and Tweed. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy; but alas! I am far unequal to the task both in genius and education." No one ever remedied an evil of this kind with such decision and effect. The Ayr, the Doon, the Irvine, and the Lugar are now flowing in light, nor have their heroes and their patriots been forgotten.

In another passage, in his common-place book, he acquaints us with the models his muse set up for imitation:—"There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which shew them to be the work of a masterly hand, and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of disappointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names—O, how mortifying to a bard's vanity!—are now 'buried among the wreck of things which were.' O, ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly, and describe so well—the last, the meanest of the muses' train—one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, and, with trembling wing, would sometimes soar after you; a poor rustic bard unknown pays this sympathetic pang to your memory. Some of you tell us, with all the charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world, unfortunate in love: *he*, too, has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends, and, worse than all, the loss of the woman he loved. Like you, all his consolation was his muse; she taught him in rustic measures to complain: happy could he have done it with your strength of imagination and flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your bones, and may you now enjoy that solace and rest which the world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of poesie and love!" Much of the man and the poet is visible in this remarkable passage; it prepares us for his approaching sunburst of poetry, which lightened more than Carrick and Kyle.

Those who imagine Burns to have been only a rhyming, raving youth, who sauntered on the banks of streams, in lonely glens, and by castles grey, musing on the moon, and woman, and other inconstant things, do him injustice; a letter in 1783 to his cousin, James Burness, writer in Montrose, shews something of the world around him.—"This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet-weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landholders, full of ideas of farming, gathered from England, and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds in the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what in the event we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods, in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well informed on new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its still more unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast." Here the poet is sunk, and the observing farmer rises: in the same letter he touches on a theme which had its influence on his own character and habits—at least he imagined so.

"There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at the last; and happy were it for numbers of them, if she would leave them no worse than when she found them." At the period to which this refers, many farmers on the sea-coast were engaged in the contraband trade: their horses and servants

were frequently employed in disposing, before the dawn, of importations, made during the cloud of night; and though Burns, perhaps, took no part in the traffic, he associated with those who carried it on, and seemed to think that insight into new ways of life, and human character, more than recompensed him for the risk he ran. It is dangerous for a bare hand to pluck a lily from among nettles; men of few virtues and many follies are unsafe companions.

"I have often observed," he says, "in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him, though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be with strict justice called wicked. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us examine, impartially, how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity; and how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation. I say, any man who can thus think will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him with a brother's eye. I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind, commonly known by the ordinary phrase of blackguards, sometimes further than was consistent with the safety of my character. Those who, by thoughtless prodigality or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin, though disgraced by follies, I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty." All this is true; but men of evil deeds are not, till they have purified themselves, fit companions for the young and the inflammable. There is no human being so depraved as to be without something which connects him with the sympathies of life. Dirk Hatteraick, before he hung himself, made out a balanced account to his owners, shewing that, though he had cut throats and drowned bantlings as a smuggler, he could reckon with the house of Middleburg for every stiver. It is more pleasing to perceive, in the Poet's early prose, sentiments similar to those which he afterwards more poetically expressed in his "Address to the Rigidly Righteous."

> "Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler sister woman;
> Tho' they may gang a kennin' wrang,
> To step aside is human.
> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The reason *why* they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark,
> How far, perhaps, they rue it."

The people of Kyle were slow in appreciating this philosophy. When they saw him hand-and-glove with roving smugglers, or sitting with loose comrades, who scorned the decencies of life, or looking seriously at a horde of gypsies huddled together in a kiln, or musing among "randie, gangrel bodies" in Poosie Nancie's, they could not know that, like a painter, he was studying character, and making sketches for future pictures of life and manners: they saw nothing but danger to himself from such society. And here lies the secret of the complaint he has recorded against the world, in his twenty-fourth year.—"I don't well know what is the reason of it, but, somehow or other, though I am pretty generally beloved, yet I never could find the art of commanding respect. I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in, what Sterne calls, the understrapping virtue of discretion." No doubt of it. The sober and sedate saw that he respected not himself; they loved him for his manliness of character, and eloquence, and independence; but they grieved for a weakness out of which they could not see that strength and moral beauty would come.

The glory of his poetry was purchased at a price too dear for himself. "In Irvine," says Gilbert, "he had contracted some acquaintance of a freer manner of thinking, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue, which had hitherto restrained him."—"The principal thing which gave my mind a turn," says Burns to Dr. Moore, "was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless child of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man, taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying, just as he was ready to launch out into the world, he went to sea in despair. His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and, of course, strove to imitate him; in some measure I succeeded. I had pride before; but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself, where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief." Richard Brown, to whom this refers, survived the storms which threatened shipwreck to his youth, and lived and died respected. When spoken to on the subject, he exclaimed, "Illicit love! levity of a sailor! The Poet had nothing to learn that way when I saw him first."

That Burns talked and thought too freely and indiscreetly, in his early years, we have evidence in verse. In his memorandum-book

there are entries which, amid all their spirit and graphic beauty, contain levities of expression which may be tolerated when the wine is flowing and the table in a roar, but which look not so becoming on the sober page which reflection has sanctioned. In May, 1785, he wrote the lively chant called "Robin," in which he gives an account of his birth:

"There was a lad was born in Kyle,
But what'n a day o' what'n a style
I doubt its hardly worth our while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

"The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' she, wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof—
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

"But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see, by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee, Robin."

In these lines he approaches the border-land between modesty and impropriety—we must quote no farther, nor seek to shew the Poet in still merrier moods. Burns, in all respects, arose from the people: he worked his way out of the darkness, drudgery, and vulgarities of rustic life, and, in spite of poverty, pain, and disappointment, emerged into the light of heaven. He was surrounded by coarse and boisterous companions, who were fit for admiring the ruder sallies of his wit, but incapable of understanding those touches of moral pathos and exquisite sensibility with which his sharpest things are accompanied. They perceived but the thorns of the rose—they felt not its fine odour. The spirit of poesie led him, in much peril, through the prosaic wilderness around, and prepared him for asserting his right to one of the highest places in the land of song.

As the elder Burness was now dead, the Poet had to exercise his own judgment in the affairs of Mossgiel: at first all seemed to prosper.—"I had entered," he says, "upon this farm with a full resolution—'Come, go to, I will be wise;' I read farming books; I calculated crops; I attended markets; and, in short, in spite of the devil, the world and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from the late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, 'like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.'"—"The farm of Mossgiel," says Gilbert, "lies very high, and mostly on a cold, wet bottom. The first four years that we were on the farm were very frosty, and the spring was very late. Our crops, in consequence, were very unprofitable, and, notwithstanding our utmost diligence and economy, we found ourselves obliged to give up our bargain, with the loss of a considerable portion of our original stock." The judgment could not be great which selected a farm that lay high, on a cold, wet bottom, and purchased bad seed-corn. That Burns put his hand to the plough and laboured incessantly there can be no doubt—but an unsettled head gives the hands much to do: when he put pen to paper, all thoughts of crops and cattle vanished; he only noted down ends of verse and fragments of song: his copy of Small's Treatise on Ploughs is now before me; not one remark appears on the margins; but on the title-page is written "Robert Burns, Poet." He had now decided on his vocation.

This study of song, love of reading, wanderings in woods, nocturnal excursions in matters of love, and choice of companions, who had seen much and had much to tell, was, unconsciously to himself, forcing Burns upon the regions of poesie. To these may be added the establishment of a club, in which subjects of a moral or domestic nature were discussed. The Tarbolton club consisted of some half-dozen young lads, sons of farmers; the Poet who planned it was the ruling star; the place of meeting was a small public-house in the village; the sum expended by each was not to exceed three-pence, and, with the humble cheer which this could bring, they were, when the debate was concluded, to toast their lasses and the continuance of friendship. Here he found a vent for his own notions, and as the club met regularly and continued for years, he disciplined himself into something of a debater and acquired a readiness and fluency of language; he was never at a loss for thoughts.

Burns drew up the regulations.—"As the great end of human society," says the exordium, "is to become wiser and better, this ought, therefore, to be the principal view of every man in every station of life. But, as experience has taught us that such studies as inform the head and mend the heart, when long continued, are apt to exhaust the faculties of the mind, it has been found proper to relieve and unbend the mind, by some employment or another, that may be agreeable enough to keep its powers in exercise, but, at the same time, not so serious as to exhaust them. But, superadded to this, by far the greater part of mankind are under the necessity of earning the sustenance of human life, by the labour of their bodies, whereby not only the faculties of the mind, but the sinews and nerves of the body, are so fatigued that it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to some amusement or diversion, to relieve the wearied man, worn down with the necessary labours of life." The first meeting was held on Halloween, in the year 1780. Burns was president, and the question of debate was, "Suppose a young man, bred a farmer, but without any fortune, has it in his power to marry either of two women, the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome

in person, nor agreeable in conversation, but who can manage the household affairs of a farm well enough; the other of them a girl every way agreeable, in person, conversation, and behaviour, but without any fortune: which of them shall he choose?" Other questions of a similar tendency were discussed, and many matters regarding domestic duties and social obligations were considered. This rustic institution united the means of instruction with happiness; but, on the removal of the poet from Lochlea, it lost the spirit which gave it life, and, dissensions arising, the club was scattered, and the records, much of them in Burns' hand-writing, destroyed.

No sooner was the Poet settled at Mossgiel, than he was requested to aid in forming a similar club in Mauchline. The regulations of the Tarbolton institution suggested those of the other; but the fines for non-attendance, instead of being spent in drink, were laid out in the purchase of books; the first work thus obtained was the Mirror, the second the Lounger, and the time was not distant when the founder's genius was to supply them with a work not destined soon to die. This society subscribed for the first edition of the poems of its celebrated associate. The members were originally country lads, chiefly sons of husbandmen—a description of persons, in the opinion of Burns, more agreeable in their manners, and more desirous of improvement, than the smart, self-conceited mechanics of towns, who were ready to wrangle and dispute on all topics, and whose vanity would never allow that they were confuted.

One of the biographers of Burns has raised what the Poet calls "a philosophic reek," on the propriety of refining the minds of hinds and farmers, by means of works of elegance and delicacy: without believing, with Currie, that if not a positive evil, it is a doubtful blessing, we may question whether more than a dozen, out of ten thousand hinds and mechanics, would feel inconvenience from increased delicacy of taste. On a vast number such lessons would be utterly lost, for no polish can convert a common pebble into a diamond; while, from the minds of many, it would remove the weeds with the same discriminating hand that the Poet cleared his riggs of corn, and "spared the symbol dear," the Scottish thistle. In truth, the danger which Currie dreaded has been encountered and overcome; more than all the works he enumerated, as forming the reading of Burns, are to be found in the hands of the peasantry of Scotland. Milton, Thomson, Young, poets of the highest order and of polished elegance, are as well known to the peasantry as the Bible is: yet no one has complained that a furrow more or less has been drawn in consequence, that our shepherds smear their sheep with too delicate a finger, and that our rustics are oppressed by a fastidious nicety of taste.

It would have been better for the Poet if he had maintained that purity in himself, which, in the regulations of his clubs, he desired to see in others. The consequences of keeping company with the free and the joyous, were now to be manifested. Soon after his father's death, one of his mother's maids, in person not at all attractive, produced his

"Sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,"

and furnished him with the opportunity of standing, as a sinner, on the stool of repentance, and commemorating the event in rhymes, licentious as well as humorous. He had already sung of his own birth in a free and witty way, and he now put a song into the mouth of the partner of his folly, in which she cries, with rather more of levity than sorrow—

"Wha will own he did the fau't,
Wha will buy the groanin-maut,
Wha will tell me how to ca't?
The rantin' dog, the daddie o't.

"When I mount the creepie chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I'll ask nae mair,
The rantin' dog, the daddie o't."

Nor can any one applaud the taste of "Rob the Rhymer's Address to his Illegitimate Child:" he glories in a fault which, he imagines, perplexed the church; for, he sought not to conceal from himself, that both the minister and elders were all but afraid of meddling with a delinquent, who could make the country merry at their expense. In a third poem, he gives a ludicrous account of his appearance before the session, and of the admonition he received. Instead of promising amendment, he draws consolation from Scripture with equal audacity and wit:—

"King David, o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses such mischief,
As fill'd his after life with grief,
An' bluidy rants,
An' yet he's rank'd amang the chief
O' lang-syne saunts.

"And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
My wicked rhymes, an' drucken rants,
I'll gi'e auld cloven Clootie's haunts
An unco slip yet,
An' snugly sit amang the saunts
At Davie's hip yet."

It is painful to touch, even with a gentle hand, on the moral sores of so fine a genius, but his character cannot be understood otherwise: almost any other erring youth would have resigned himself, without resistance, to the discipline of the kirk, and bowed to its rebuke: Burns was not to be so tamed—stricken, he struck again, and, instead of courting silence and seclusion, sung a new song, and walked out into the open sunshine of remark and ob-

servation. I cannot set this regardlessness down to growing hardness within, nor to petrified feeling: it arose from a want of taste in seeking distinction. "The mair they talk, I'm kenn'd the better," he had already adopted as a motto; he knew that folly such as his was not uncommon, and he hoped, for one person who censured, there would be two who thought him a clever fellow, with wit at will—a little of a sinner, but a great deal of a poet.

This desire of distinction was strong in Burns. In those days he would not let a five pound note pass through his hands, without bearing away a witty endorsement in rhyme: a drinking-glass always afforded space for a verse: the blank leaf of a book was a favourite place for a stanza; and the windows of inns, and even dwelling-houses, which he frequented, exhibit to this day lively sallies from his hand. Yet, perhaps, a love of fame was not stronger in him than in others. In his time magazines were few, and newspapers not numerous; into the daily, weekly, or monthly papers, aspirants in verse can now pour their effusions: but Burns had no such facilities when he started, and was obliged to take the nearest way to notice. He began, likewise, to talk of his exploits over the pint-stoup: he gave to himself, in one of his rhymes, the name of "drunken ranter," and, with ordinary powers, and but a moderate inclination, desired to be numbered with five-bottle debauchees, who saw three horns on the moon, and had

"A voice like the sea, and a drouth like a whale."

He went farther: he asserted, with Meston, good rhyme to be the product of good drink, and sung—

"I've seen me daizet upon a time
I scarce could wink, or see a styme,
Just ae half-mutchkin does me prime,
Ought less is little;
Then back I rattle on the rhyme
As gleg's a whittle."

This vaunted insobriety in verse must not be taken literally. We have seen Burns passionately in love in rhyme—we know that he was not less so with his living goddess of the hour; but it was otherwise with him in the matter of strong drink. He was no practised toper, but thought it necessary to look a gay fellow in poetry. Inspiration, in both ancient and modern times, has been imputed to wine, and Burns wished to be thought inspired. Wine was out of his reach; his muse found her themes among humble and familiar things, and it was his boast that the Ferintosh could work intellectual wonders as well as the Falernian. For others, he wished Parnassus a vineyard; but for himself, he preferred the banks of the Ayr or the Lugar, to those of Helicon, and the juice of barley to that of the grape. When he had neither money to spend on liquor, nor health to relish it, he was chanting songs in honour of tippling; putting himself down in the list of topers, and recording that whiskey was the northern ambrosia, too good for all, save gods or Scotsmen. This is not unlike the madness of Johnson from poverty, at College. In the case of Burns, there was something national as well as personal: whiskey and ale are the offspring of the Scottish vales, and he preferred them to "dearthfu' wine or foreign gill." Liquor was not then, and I believe never was, a settled desire of soul with the Poet.

When Burns supposed that his "drunken rants" and nocturnal excursions among the lasses of Kyle had made him

"——— Slander's common speech,
A text for infamy to preach,"

he found, to his surprise, that in another way he had won the approbation of certain ministers of the kirk of Scotland. How this came about may be briefly described. Calvinism, at that time, was agitated with a schism among its professors, and the factions were known in the west by the names of Old Light and New Light. The Old Light enthusiasts aspired to be ranked with the purest of the Covenanters; they patronized austerity of manners and humility of dress, and stigmatized much that the world loved, as things vain and unessential to salvation. The New Light countenanced no such self-denial; men were permitted to gallop on Sunday, to make merry and enjoy themselves; and women were indulged in the article of dress, and failings or follies were treated with mercy at least, if not indulgence. The former refused to lean on the slender reed of human works, thought a good deed savoured of selfishness, and that faith, and faith alone, was the light which led to heaven: the latter thought a cheerful heart was an acceptable thing with God; that good works helped to make a good end, and that faith, and faith alone, was not religion, but a false light, which led to perdition. Like the writers in the late singular controversy on Art and Nature in Poetry, the divines of the west of Scotland perhaps never concluded that faith and works were both essential to salvation, and that, in truth, Christianity required them. Each side thundered from the pulpit; their sermons partook of the character of curses, and their conversation in private life had the hue of controversy. Their parishioners, too, raised up their voices—for, in Scotland, the meanest peasant can be eloquent and puzzling on speculative theology—and the whole land rung with mystical discussions on effectual calling, free grace, and predestination, when Burns precipitated himself into the midst of the conflict.

The Poet sided with the New Light faction. For this several reasons may be assigned—he was not educated closely in the tenets of Cal-

vinism; and his own good taste and sense taught him that faith without works was folly. His experience in church discipline, in the case of "Sonsie Bess," had not tended to increase his reverence for the Old Light professors, among whom "Daddie Auld," his parish pastor, was a leader. Moreover, Gavin Hamilton, of whom he held his land, was not only a New-Light-ite, but a friend of the Poet, and a martyr in the cause of free-agency. We may add to all this, that the Poet naturally fell into the ranks of those who allowed greater liberty of speech, and a wider longitude of morals. Perhaps the chiefs of the Old Light Association would have regarded little an attack in prose, as to such missiles they were accustomed; but their new enemy assaulted them with a weapon against which the armour of dulness was no defence. He attacked and vanquished them with witty verse, much to the joy of the children of the New Light, and greatly to the amusement of the country.

Of the effect of these satiric attacks, the Poet himself gives an account to Moore:—"The first of my poetic offspring which saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my 'Holy Fair.' I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit: but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. 'Holy Willie's Prayer' next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery—if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers." This is almost all that the Poet says of his satiric labours in aid of the New Light. The poem to which he first alludes is called "The Holy Tuilzie," and relates the bickering and battling which arose between Moodie, minister of Riccarton, and Russel, minister of Kilmarnock—both children of the Old Light. The poetic merit of the piece is small; the personalities marked and strong. "The Ordination" succeeded, and is in a better vein. There is uncommon freedom of language and happiness of expression in almost every verse. The crowning satire of the whole is "Holy Willie's Prayer," a daring work, personal, poetical, and profane. The hero of the piece was a west country pretender to superlative godliness; one of the Old Light faction; an elder of the kirk—a man with many failings, who made himself busy in searching for faults in the flock. Burns first signalized him in an epitaph, in which he consigns him to reprobation, and then warns the devil that to lay his "nine-tailed cat" on such a contemptible delinquent would be little to his own credit. Then he makes Willie honestly confess his own backslidings, and explain predestination in a way that causes us to shudder as well as to smile:—

"O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They 've done afore thee!"

He next bethinks him of his own glory and errors; the latter, it is quite plain, he considers but as spots in the sun—specks in the cup of the cowslip. He claims praise in the singular, and acknowledges folly in the plural:—

"And sometimes, too, wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin."

Nor can Burns be said to have overlooked his own interest; he compliments Hamilton of Mossgiel as one—

"Who has so many taking arts,
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts,
He steals awa'."

In a similar strain of poetry and wit, he, in another poem of the same period, congratulates Goudie of Kilmarnock on his work respecting revealed religion. The reasoning and the learning of the essayist are slumbering with all forgotten things; but the verses they called into life are not fated soon to die:—

"O Goudie! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black coats and reverend wigs,
Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
Girning looks back,
Wishing the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize you quick."

In after-life the poet seemed little inclined to remember the verses he composed on this ridiculous controversy; and I have heard that he was unwilling to talk about the subject. Perhaps he felt that he had launched the burning darts of verse against men of blameless lives, and honesty, and learning; that his muse had wasted some of her time on a barren and profitless topic, and had sung less from her own heart than for the gratification of others. Of all these poems, he admitted but the "Ordination" into his works, willing, it would seem, to let the rest die with the controversy which occasioned them. The New Light professors seemed to care little what sort of weapon they employed: the verse of Burns has two edges, like a Highland sword, and Presbyterianism suffered as well as the Old Light. It is almost incredible that venerable clergymen applauded those profane sallies, learned them by heart, carried copies in their pockets, and quoted and re-

cited them till they grew popular, and were on every lip. Even "Holy Willie's Prayer" was countenanced by the New Light pastors. Among the Poet's papers was found an epistle to the Rev. John Mac Math, enclosing a copy of the Prayer which he had requested; the date of this communication, Sept. 17, 1785, fixes the season of this western dispute. It seems, however, to approach the close; the Poet is grown weary of his work, as well he might:—

"My music, tir'd with mony a sonnet,
On gown, and band, and douce black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it,
And anathem her."

Burns, during this drudgery, was strengthening his hands for higher and purer duties. In labouring to accommodate his thoughts, and

"Riving the words to gar them clink,"

in unison with the technicalities of mystical controversy, he was acquiring an almost audacious vigour of expression, and a ready skill in handling subjects either of fact or of fancy. It is true that he learned to speak profanely, but then this was in the service of the kirk; he learned something more when he dined with drunken lawyers, and grew tipsy among godly priests. The muse of Kyle helped to extinguish the Old Light, but she left predestination where she found it. A Mauchline mason said to the Poet, when he read him "Holy Willie's Prayer," "It's a' very weel and very witty, and I have laughed that shouldna have laughed; but ye'll no hinder me from thinking that Providence kenn'd weel what he was doing when he made man—foresaw the upshot—wha was to be good and wha was to be bad; and knowing this, and making man a fallible creature still, looks as like predestination as ought I ever heard of."

These satiric rhymes established the fame of Burns in his native place; his company was now courted by country lairds, village lawyers, and parish school-masters, and by all persons who had education above common, or kept some state in their households. He was always welcome to Gavin Hamilton and his family; equally so to Robert Aiken, a worthy writer in Ayr; and now he became so to all who had any relish for wit, or any soul for poetry. He was at once the companion of the grave and of the giddy; now dining with the minister and a douce friend or two at the manse; then presiding in a Mason-meeting, chanting songs, and pushing about the punch with the "brethren of the mystic level," or communing on the severity of the excise laws with a "blackguard smuggler," or some Highland envoy from the dominions of Ferintosh, whose "cousin did as good as keep a small still." When he appeared in company he was expected to say something clever or shrewd; he was pointed out at church and at market, and peasant spoke of him to peasant as a wild, witty lad, who lived at Mossgiel, and had all the humour of Ramsay, and more than the spirit of Fergusson.

It is humiliating to think that works which Burns seemed willing to forget brought him first into notice. Some of the most exquisite lyrics ever said or sung failed to do for him what "The Holy Tuilzie" and "The Ordination" accomplished at once: and there can be no question that "Holy Willie's Prayer" and the "Epistle to Goudie" prepared the minds of the people around him for admiring his "Halloween" and his "Cotter's Saturday Night." In truth, poetry, which only embodies sentiments and feelings common to our nature, cannot compete, in the race of immediate fame, with verse appealing to our passions and our prejudices, and glowing with the heat of a passing dispute. Time settles and explains all. The true Florimel is found to be of delicate flesh and blood, breathing of loveliness and attraction, and adorned by nature; while the false Duessa, is discovered to be a thing of shreds and patches, with jewels of glass, and an artificial complexion. Nature and truth finally triumph, and to nature and truth Burns accordingly returned. He left the agitated puddles of mysticism to drink at the pure springs with the muse of love, and joy, and patriotism.

Of the person and manners of the Poet, at this important period of his life, we have various accounts; but the portraits, although differing in posture as well as in light and shade, all express the same sentiment. He was now grown up to man's estate, and had taken his station as such in society: he was the head, too, of his father's house, and though his expenses were regulated upon a system of close economy, his bargains, as a farmer, controlled by his brother Gilbert, and his demeanour at the fire-side under the mild influence of his mother, he had in all other matters his own will. He has recorded much of himself at this period both in verse and prose, nor can this be set down to egotism: from all the world, save the little community of Kyle, he was completely shut out, and he turned his eyes on himself, and wrote down his own hopes and aspirations. He has even recorded his stature in rhyme:—

"O! why the deuce should I repine,
Or be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine,
I'll go and be a sodger."

His large dark expressive eyes; his swarthy visage; his broad brow, shaded with black waving hair; his melancholy look, and his well-knit frame, vigorous and active—all united to draw men's eyes upon him. He affected, too, a certain oddity of dress and manner. He

was clever in controversy; but obstinate, and even fierce, when contradicted, as most men are who have built up their opinions for themselves. He used with much taste the common pithy saws and happy sayings of his country, and invigorated his eloquence by apt quotations from old songs or ballads. He courted controversy, and it was to this period that Murdoch, the accomplished mechanic, referred, when he told me that he once heard Burns haranguing his fellow-peasants on religion at the door of a change-house, and so unacceptable were his remarks that some old men hissed him away. Nor must it be supposed that, even when listened to, he was always victorious.—"Burns, sir," said one of his old opponents, "was a 'cute chield and a witty ane, but he didna half like to have my harrow coming owre his new-fangled notions."

The early companions of the Poet were men above the common mark. Smith, to whom he addressed some of his finest poetic epistles, was a person of taste and sagacity; David Sillar, a good scholar, and something of a poet; Ranken, an out-spoken, ready-witted man, and a little of a scoffer; Lapraik lived at a distance; he had written at least one song worthy of notice. Hamilton was open-hearted and open-handed, and of a good family; Aiken seems to have abounded in good sense and good feeling; Ballantyne was much of a gentleman; Parker, kind and generous; Mackenzie, of Irvine, a skilful surgeon and a good scholar, who introduced the Poet to Dugald Stewart, Whiteford, Erskine, and Blair;—but his chief comrade and confidant was his brother Gilbert, who at an early age distinguished himself for sense and discernment.

"Gilbert," says Mackenzie, "partook more of the manner and appearance of the father, and Robert of the mother. In the first interview I had with him at Lochlea, he was frank, modest, well-informed, and communicative. The Poet seemed distant, suspicious, and without any wish to interest or please. He kept himself very silent in a dark corner of the room, and, before he took any part in conversation, I frequently observed him scrutinizing me, while I conversed with his father and his brother. From the period of which I speak, I took a lively interest in Robert Burns. Even then his conversation was rich in well-chosen figures, animated and energetic. Indeed, I have always thought that no person could have a just idea of the extent of Burns' talents who had not heard him converse. His discrimination of character was greatly beyond that of any person I ever knew, and I have often observed to him that it seemed to be intuitive. I seldom ever knew him make a false estimate of character when he formed the opinion from his own observation."

The sketch drawn by Sillar is of another kind:—"Robert Burns was some time in the parish of Tarbolton, prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily procured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe, he had a great deal to say for himself, but that they suspected his principles. He wore the only tied hair in the parish; and in the church his plaid, which was of a particular colour (I think fillemot), he wrapped in a peculiar manner round his shoulders. These surmises, and his exterior, made me solicitous of his acquaintance. I was introduced by Gilbert not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where, in a short time, I became a frequent, and, I believe, not unwelcome, visitant. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the bard, we frequently met upon Sundays at church; when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or our lasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have often been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex: many times when I have been bashfully anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them, with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance. Some of the few opportunities of a noon-tide walk that a country life allows her laborious sons, he spent on the banks of the river, or in the woods, in the neighbourhood of Stair. Some book or other he always carried, and read, when not otherwise employed; it was likewise his custom to read at table."

A third hand completes the sketch:—"Though Burns," says Professor Walker, "was still unknown as a Poet, he already numbered several clergymen among his acquaintance: one of these communicated to me a circumstance which conveyed, more forcibly than many words, an idea of the impression made upon his mind by the powers of the Poet. This gentleman had repeatedly met Burns in company, when the acuteness and originality displayed by the latter, the depth of his discernment, the force of his expressions, and the authoritative energy of his understanding, had created in the former a sense of his power, of the extent of which he was unconscious till revealed to him by accident. The second time that he appeared in the pulpit, he came with an assured and tranquil mind; and though a few persons of education were present, he advanced some length in the service with his confidence and self-possession unimpaired. But when he observed Burns, who was of a different parish, unexpectedly enter the church, he was instantly affected with a tremour and embarrassment, which apprized him of the impression his mind, unknown to itself, had previously received."

Authorities such as these confute the inconsiderate assertions of Heron, respecting the "opening character" of the Poet. We have no proof that he became discontented in early life with the humble labours to which he saw himself confined, and with the poor subsistence he was able to earn by them—that he could not help looking upon the rich and great whom he saw around, with an emotion between envy and contempt, as if something had still whispered to his heart that there was injustice in the external inequality between his fate and theirs. The early injuries of fortune oppressed him at times; but, till he was thirty years old, his spirit was buoyant and unbroken, and he looked with an unclouded brow on the world around him.

In "The Holy Fair," the Poet, accidentally or purposely, rose out of the lower regions of personal invective into the purer air of true poetry, and gave us a picture of singular breadth and beauty. The aim of the poem is chiefly to reprehend, by means of wit and humour, those almost indecent festivities which, in many western parishes, accompany the administration of the sacrament. Instead of preaching to the staid and the pious under the roof of the kirk, the scene is transferred to the open church-yard, where a tent or pulpit is erected for the preachers; while, all around, the people of the parish seat themselves on graves or grave-stones, decorously to look and listen. In the earlier days of the church, when men were more in earnest, there is no doubt that a scene such as this in the open air was attended with nothing of an objectionable nature; nay, at present, the thoughtful and the serious contemplate it as something edifying and impressive; but with the pious and the orderly come swarms of the idle and the profligate; bevies of lads and lasses keep moving about, in search of better seats or finer points of view, and tiring, or affecting to tire, of the sermon, which is sometimes of the longest, retire to a neighbouring change-house, or to the open door of an ale-booth, where, as they empty the glass, they may hear the voice of the preacher. There is no doubt that these "Holy Fairs," as they were scoffingly called, afforded scenes more than justifying serious as well as sarcastic reproof. In the poem, Burns here and there shews he had been reading other poets. His allegorical personages are partly copied from Fergusson, and the hares that hirpled down the furs did the same for Montgomery. "The farcical scene the Poet there describes," says Gilbert, "was often a favourite field for his observation, and most of the incidents he mentions had actually passed before his eyes."

Burns now openly took upon himself the name of Poet; he not only wrote it in his books, but wrought it into his rhymes, and began to entertain hopes of distinction in the realms of song. But nothing, perhaps, marks the character of the man more than the alteration which he made in his own name. He had little relish for by-gone things; there are few gazings back at periods of honour or of woes in all his strains. The name he had hitherto borne was of old standing, the Poet sat in judgment upon it, concluded that it had a barbarous sound, and threw away Burness—a name two syllables long, and adopted that of Burns in its stead. Had his father been alive, this might not have happened. On the 20th of March, 1786, he says to one of his Correspondents:—"I hope some time before we hear the gouk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend having a gill between us in a mutchkin stoup, which will be a great comfort and consolation to, dear Sir, your humble servant, Robert Burness."—This is the latest time that I find his original name in his own hand-writing; it is plain, that up to this period, he imagined he had achieved nothing under that of his father deserving to live. On the 20th of April he wrote his name "Burns" in a letter enclosing to his friend Kennedy that beautiful poem the "Mountain Daisy," headed "The Gowan." This was with the Poet a season of changes.

Burns commenced emblazoning his altered name with all that is bright and lasting in verse. From the day that he entered upon Mossgiel with the resolution of becoming rich, till the dark hour on which he quitted it, reduced well nigh to beggary, he continued to pour forth poem after poem, and song succeeding song, with a variety and rapidity truly wonderful. His best poems are the offspring of those four unfortunate years, and the history of each has something in it of the curious or the romantic. "The Death and dying words of poor Mailie," and, better still, "Poor Mailie's Elegy," suggested to him probably by "The Ewie wi' the crooked horn" of Skinner, were written before the death of his father—at least the former was. The Poet had, it seems, bought a ewe with two lambs from a neighbour, and tethered her in a field at Lochlea. "He and I," says Gilbert, "were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch."

The "Elegy" has much of the Poet's latter freedom and force. He had caressed this four-footed favourite till she followed at his heels like a dog:—

> "Through a' the town she trotted by him,
> A lang half-mile she could descry him,
> Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
> She ran wi' speed;
> A friend mair faithfu' ne'er come nigh him,
> Than Mailie dead."

One of the rejected verses ought to be remem-

bered in Kyle, were it but for the honour done to the lambs of Fairlee :—

"She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo' like goats, an' legs like trams,
She was the flower o' Fairlee lambs,
A famous breed;
Now Robin, greetin' chews the hams
O' Mailie dead."

The image in the two last lines is out of harmony with the sentiment of the poem; and Burns, whose taste was born with him, omitted the verse in consequence.

The "Epistle to David Sillar" was written some time in the summer of 1784. Burns was in the habit of composing verse at the plough or the harrow :—he turned it over in his mind for several days, and when he had polished it to his satisfaction, or found a moment's leisure, he committed it to paper. Gilbert relates that he was weeding with Robert in the kail-yard, when he repeated the principal part of the Epistle. The first idea of his becoming an author was then started. "I was much pleased," says his brother, "with the Epistle, and said to him that I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste: that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scottish poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here there was a train of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed pleased with my criticism, and we talked of sending it to some magazine."

If we credit the accuracy of the verse, and the memory of Gilbert, the Poet was, in 1784, acquainted with Jean Armour, and had become her admirer and lover. But it is more likely that the verse in which her name occurs was added afterwards, unless we believe that he had made an inroad among the "Mauchline belles," almost as soon as he went to Mossgiel. His Epistles are of high merit. They are, perhaps, the finest compositions of the kind in the language—airy, elegant, and philosophic—with more nature than Prior's Epistle to "Fletwood Shepherd," and equal power of illustration. He had already begun to take those serious looks at human life of which his poems are full; nor did he fail to perceive how unequally the gifts of fortune, as well as those of genius, are divided.

"It's hardly in a body's power,
To keep at times from being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And kenna how to wair't."

He lived long enough to think more deeply and more darkly on this topic. At present the world was brightening before him—the mist seemed rolling away from his path, and he felt disposed to enjoy life without murmuring.

The epistolary form was a favourite way with Burns of giving air to his opinions and feelings; when he had doubts of fame—was o'ermastered with his passions—or disgusted with

"The tricks of knaves and fash of fools,"

he lifted the pen and indited an epistle to a friend, and poured out the loves, the cares, the sorrows, the joys, the hopes, and fears of the passing moment. It is truly wonderful with what ease and felicity—nay, with what elegance, he twines the garlands of his fancy round a barren topic. Much of his history may be sought for in these compositions. In his "Epistle to James Smith," he alludes to his Poems: intimates that he had thoughts of printing them, pretends to take alarm at the sight of moths revelling on the pages of authors :—

"Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters."

and philosophically exclaims, as well as poetically—

"Then farewell hopes o' laurel-boughs
To garland my poetic brows:
Henceforth I'll rove where busy plough
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lonely heights an' howes
My rustic sang."

Burns takes a loftier view of the matter in his epistle to Lapraik, written on the first of April, 1785. He intimates that he is no poet, in the high acceptation of the word; but a rhymer, who deals in homely words, and has no pretence to learning. He pulls himself down, but he refuses to let any one else up; he prefers a spark of nature's fire to all the artificial heat of education, and speaks contemptuously of "critic folk," and learned judges :—

"What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest Nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

"A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak:
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!"

In a second epistle to the same person, Burns claims for "the ragged followers of the Nine" a life of immortal light, and presents to their contemplation the sordid sons of Mammon suffering under the transmigration of souls :—

"Though here they scrape, and squeeze, and growl,
Their worthless neivefu' of a soul
May in some future carcase howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light."

In a poetic letter to another of his companions, while exulting in the idea of making the rivers and rivulets of Kyle flow bright in future song, he lets us into the secret of his own mode of musing:—

"The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel' he learned to wander
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
An' no think lang!
O! sweet to stray, an' pensive ponder
A heartfelt sang!"

Of these poems, we are informed that the first epistle to John Lapraik was written in consequence of a clever song, which that indifferent rhymer had made, under the inspiration of adversity. The epistle to Ranken carries its own explanation with it: we may allow it to remain half concealed in the thin mist of allegory. The epistle to Smith is perhaps the very best of all these compositions: the singular ease of the verse; the moral dignity of one passage; the wit and humour of a second; the elegance of compliment in a third; and the life which animates the whole, must be felt by the most ordinary mind. One of the verses was frequent on the lips of Byron during the darkening down of his own day:

'When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,'
Then fareweel vacant, careless roamin,'
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin,'
An' social noise;
An' fareweel, dear, deluding woman!
The joy of joys!"

In the winter of 1785, Burns composed his "Address to the Deil." His sable majesty is familiar to the imagination of every Scottish peasant, and there are few wild glens in which he has not been heard or seen. The Satan of Milton was a favourite with the Poet; he admired his fortitude in enduring what could not be remedied, and pitied a noble and exalted mind in ruins. This feeling he united to the traditions of shepherds and husbandmen, and treated the Evil Spirit with much of the respect due to fallen royalty. "It was, I think," says Gilbert, "in the winter, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family fire—and I could yet point out the particular spot—that the author first repeated to me the 'Address to the Deil.'" That Burns was now acquainted with Jean Armour, the variations of this poem sufficiently prove:—

"Lang syne, in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin' Adam's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonny Jean,
My dearest part,
A dancin', sweet, young, handsome quean,
Wi' guileless heart."

The evil spirit of religious controversy was now fairly out of him: he makes no allusions, though the temptation was great, to the clergy, but treats the subject with natural truth and vigour. All northern natures sympathize in the following fine stanza:—

"I've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruin'd castles gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon."

There is something of serious jocularity in the verse which expresses the Poet's fears and hopes of futurity:—

"An' now, auld Cloots, I ken y're thinkin,'
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner, jinkin',
An' cheat you yet."

In the contemplated repentance of Satan, Burns seems to hint at universal redemption—a finishing touch of fine and unexpected tenderness.

The "Halloween" is a happy mixture of the dramatic and the descriptive, and bears the impress of the manners, customs, and superstitions of the people. We see the scene, and are made familiar with the actors; we not only see them busied in the mysteries of the night, but we hear their remarks; nor can we refrain from accompanying them on their solitary and perilous errands to "winnow wechts of naething, sow hemp-seed, pull kale-stocks, eat apples at the glass;" or, more romantic still, "wet the left sleeve of the shirt where three lairds' lands meet at a burn." The whole poem hovers between the serious and the ludicrous: in delineating the superstitious beliefs and mysterious acts of the evening, Burns keeps his own opinion to himself. The scene is laid in the last night of harvest, as the name implies, at a husbandman's fire-side, whose corn is gathered into the stack-yard and the barn; and the hands which aided in the labour are met—

"To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
An' haud their Halloween."

They seem not unaware that while they are merry, or looking into futurity, fairies are dancing on Cassilis-Downans, and witches are mounted on their "rag-weed nags," hurrying to some wild rendezvous, or concerting, with the author of mischief, fresh woes for man. It is the most equal of all the Poet's compositions.

A singular poem, and in its nature personal, was also the offspring of the same year. This is "Death and Doctor Hornbook." The hero of the piece was John Wilson, school-master of the parish of Tarbolton: a person of blameless life, fond of argument, opinionative, and

obstinate. At a mason-meeting, it seems, he provoked the Poet by questioning some of his positions, in a speech stuffed with Latin phrases, and allusions to pharmacy. The future satire dawned on Burns at the moment, for he exclaimed twice, "Sit down, Doctor Hornbook!" On his way home he seated himself on the parapet of a bridge near "Willie's Mill," and, in the moon-light, began to reflect on what had passed. It then occurred to him that Wilson had added to the moderate income of his school, the profit arising from the sale of a few common medicines; this suggested an interview with "Death," and all the ironical commendations of the Dominie, which followed. He composed the poem on his perilous seat, and, when he had done, fell asleep; he was awakened by the rising sun, and, on going home, committed it to paper. It exhibits a singular union of fancy and humour; the attention is arrested at once by the ludicrous difficulty felt, in counting the horns of the moon, and we expect something to happen when his shadowy majesty comes upon the stage, relates his experience in "nicking the thread and choking the breath," and laments how his scythe and dart are rendered useless by the skill of Dr. Hornbook. On the appearance of the poem, Wilson found the laugh of Kyle too much for him—

"The weans haud out their fingers laughin'."

So he removed to Glasgow, where he engaged with success in other pursuits. He lives, but loves no one the better, it is averred, for naming the name of the Poet, or making any allusion to the poem. Burns repeated the satire to his brother, during the afternoon of the day on which it was composed. "I was holding the plough," said Gilbert, "and Robert was letting water off the field beside me."

The patriotic feelings of the bard were touched when he took up the song of "Scotch Drink," against the government of the day, and uttered his "Earnest cry and prayer to the Scottish representatives in the House of Commons." Yet bitter as he sometimes is, and overflowing with humorous satire, these poems abound with natural and noble images; nay, he scolds himself into a pleasant mood, and scatters praise on the "chosen Five-and-Forty," with much skill and discrimination. His praise of whiskey is strangely mingled with sadness:—

"Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
Though life's a gift no worth receivin';
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin',
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down hill, scrievin',
Wi' rattlin' glee.

"Thou clears the head o' doited Lear,
Thou cheers the heart o' droopin' Care,
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At 's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile."

A country forge with a blazing fire, an anxious blacksmith, and a welding heat, will rise to the fancy readily on reading these inimitable stanzas:—

"When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see thee fizz and freath
I' the luggit caup!
Then *Burnewin* comes on like death
At ev'ry chap.

"Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour."

Nor are there wanting stanzas of a more solemn kind to bring trembling to our mirth. The Scotsman dying on a battle-field, with the sound of victory in his ear, is a noble picture:—

"Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes!—wi' fearless eye he sees him,
Wi' bluidy han' a welcome gi'es him,
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
In faint huzzas!"

He steps at once from the serious to the comic: his description of Mither Scotland sitting on her mountain throne, her diadem a little awry, her eyes reeling, and the heather below, becoming moist during her prolonged libations, is equally humorous and irreverent. Those who may suspect that all this singing about liquor arose from a love of it, will be glad to hear that when Nanse Tinnoch was told how Burns proposed to toast the Scottish members in her house "nine times a week," she exclaimed, "Him drink in my house! I hardly ken the colour o' his coin."

The year 1785 was a harvest season of verse with Burns. Some of his poems he hesitated for awhile to make public; others he copied, and scattered amongst his friends. Of these one of the most remarkable is "The Jolly Beggars." This drama, which I cannot help considering the most varied and characteristic of the Poet's works, was unknown, save to some west country acquaintances, till after his death, when it came unexpectedly out. The opening seems uttered by another muse than Coila—the sound is of the elder days of verse; but the moment the curtain draws up and shews the actors, the spirit of Burns appears kindling and animating all. It is impossible to deny his presence:—

"First, niest the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae an' blankets warm—
She blinkit on her sodger:

An' aye he gied the tosie drab
The tither skelpin kiss,

While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an aumos dish.
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whup,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up."—

The scene of this rustic drama lies in Mauchline, and the actors are strolling vagrants, who, having acquired meal and money by begging, pilfering, and sleight-of-hand, assemble in Poosie Nansie's, to "toom their pocks and pawn their duds," and

"Gie ae night's discharge to care,"

over the gill-stoup and the quaigh. They hold a sort of Beggars' Saturday-night—sing-songs, utter sentiments, and lay down the loose laws of the various classes they represent. The characters are numerous. The maimed soldier, who bore scars both for Scotland and for love; and his doxy, warm with blankets and usquebaugh, who in her youth forsook the sword for the sake of the church, but returned to the drum when age brought reflection. The merry-andrew, who would venture his neck for liquor, who held love to be the half of his craft, and yet was a fool still;—the highland dame who had lightened many a purse—been ducked in many a well: who, with a countryman, had laid the land under contribution from Tweed to Spey, and was only hindered from making a foray, farther south, by the interposition of the "waefu' woodie!" The pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle;—the sturdy tinker, who had "travelled round all Christian ground" in his vocation, and swore by all was swearing worth whenever he was moved;—and, last of all, the "wight of Homer's craft," who, though lame of a foot, had three wives, and could allure the people round him in crowds, when he sung of love and country revelry. All these, and more, sing, and shout, and talk, and act in character! and unite in giving effect to the chorus of a song which claims, for the jovial ragged ring, exemption from the cares which weigh down the sedate and the orderly, and a happiness which refuses to wait on the train-attended carriage, or on the sober bed of matrimony. The curtain drops as they all shout,

"A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest."

There is nothing in the language which, for life and character, approaches this singular "Cantata." The Beggar's Opera is a burial compared to it; it bears some resemblance to the Wallenstein's camp of Schiller, as translated by Lord Francis Egerton; the same variety, and the same license of action and speech distinguish both.

The origin of the Cantata is worth relating. Mauchline ale, and Mauchline maidens, frequently brought the Poet from Mossgiel, which lies but some half-a-mile distant. He frequented the public house of John Dow on those occasions, in the immediate vicinity of the scene of "The Jolly Beggars." The house of Poosie Nansie, *alias* Agnes Gibson, stands opposite nearly to the church-yard gate. One night it happened that James Smith of Mauchline, and Burns, on their way up the street, heard the sound of "meikle fun and jokin'" in Nansie's hostelry, and saw lights streaming from the fractured windows. On entering, they found a company of wandering mendicants enjoying themselves over their dear Kilbagie. They were welcomed with cheers, entered into the humours of the scene, called for more liquor, and the noise and fun grew fast and furious. Burns paid much attention to an old soldier, with a "wooden arm and leg," whose drollery was unbounded. In a few days he rough-wrote the Cantata, and shewed it amongst his friends. He gave the only copy now known to be in existence to David Woodburn; it was lately in the hands of Thomas Stewart of Greenock.

It is probable that the Poet found it an easier task to delineate the characters, and indite the songs of the Cantata, than to endow the "Mouse" and the "Daisy" with sentiments of terror and of pity. A common ploughman would have stamped his tacketed shoe upon the one, saying "Down, vermin!" or helped the furrow over upon the other, pronouncing it a weed. With far other feelings the ploughman of Mossgiel saw the ruin of the one, and the destruction of the other. "The verses to the Mouse and the Mountain Daisy," says Gilbert, "were composed on the occasions, and while the author was holding the plough. I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise. Several of the poems were written for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author." When the coulter passed through the nest of leaves and stubble, the Poet assured the timid mouse, as it fled in terror, that the best laid schemes of men were frustrated, as well as those of mice; and that though its house was laid in ruins, and winter afforded no materials for constructing a new one, still its lot was bliss compared with his own. It was touched only with the passing, while he was affected with the past—felt the present, and dreaded the future. A similar train of sentiment runs through the Daisy: the Poet buries its opening bloom with the plough, and grieves that he cannot save a thing so lovely; nay, lest the flower should mistake the crash of the cruel coulter for the pressure of some gentler thing, he exclaims, with equal tenderness and beauty:—

"Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' speckled breast,
When upward springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east."

He suddenly turns from the fate of the flower to his own, and draws the same dark conclusions as he did in the "Mouse;"

"Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom;
Till, crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!"

His poetry abounds in melancholy predictions about himself; he had visions of beauty and of grandeur, but along with them came darker visions: want and ruin, sorrow and neglect, death and the grave. The immortality conferred on this humble flower escaped not the observation of Wordsworth as he passed, in 1833, through the "Land of Burns."

"Myriads of Daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away less happy than the One
That by the unwilling ploughshare died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love."

The fine poem of "Man was made to Mourn" was composed by Burns for the purpose of bringing forward a favourite sentiment.—"He used to remark to me," says Gilbert, "that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be illustrated, the elegy of 'Man was made to Mourn' was composed." The germ of the composition may be found in "The Life and Age of Man," which the Poet's mother was wont to sing to his grand-uncle. The same sentiment is common to both; the same form of expression, and the same words may be traced in every verse; "Man is made to mourn," is the introductory exclamation of the old; "Man was made to mourn" is the chorus of the new. Nor is the earlier poem without pathos and force; the periods of man's life are compared to the months of the year: the child is born in January, flourishes in July, and dies in December: the parallel is well maintained:—

"Then cometh May, gallant and gay,
When fragrant flowers do thrive,
The child is then become a man,
Of age twentie-and-five.
December fell, both sharp and snell,
Makes flowers creep to the ground;
Then man's threescore, both sick and sore,
No soundness in him found."

To make each month of the year correspond with five years of a man's life, the moralizing bard of the year sixteen hundred and fifty-three extinguished the faculties of man at sixty; the bard of seventeen hundred and eighty-six says nothing of life's duration, but sings the sorrows of him who, overwrought and abject, has to beg leave to toil, from a lordly fellow-worm, who scorns his poor petition, and turns him over to idleness and woe. The question which the Poet asks is one not easily answered by the oppressor:—

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,
By Nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?"

The sage of the banks of Ayr intimates to the indignant bard that a future state, where the great and the wealthy cease from troubling, is the only hope and refuge of those—"who weary laden mourn." His own desolate condition and dreary prospects raised those darksome ideas.

In the truly noble poem of the "Vision" Burns imagines himself seated, in a winter night, by his fire, which burns reluctantly; wearied with the flail, he proceeds to muse on wasted time. In his sight the scene is dark enough; he has spent the prime of youth in making rhymes for fools to sing; he has neglected advice which would have placed him at the head of a market; and now, "half-mad, half-fed, half-sarket," he is sitting undistinguished and poor. Stung with these reflections, he starts up, and is about to swear to refrain rhyme till his latest breath, when the door opens, the fire flames brighter, and a strange and lovely lady comes blushing to his side:—

"Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs,
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
I took her for some Scottish muse,
By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows
Wou'd soon been broken."

His surmise was just: she was the Muse of Kyle—his own inspirer; nay, she had a handsome leg like his Mauchline Jean, and looked the express image of his own mind:—

"A hair-brain'd, sentimental trace,
Was strongly marked in her face,
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour."

On her mantle were pictured the district and heroes of Kyle; but she came to speak, and not to be looked at. She claimed Burns for her own bard; told him to lament his luckless lot no longer; that he was there to fulfil the social plan of Nature, and form a not unim-

portant link in the great chain of being. She was intimate with all his outgoings. Her words are useful to the biographer; they exhibit the Poet in his studious moods:—

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar,
Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove through the sky;
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye."

She observed, too, that beauty agitated his frame—communicated to his tongue words of persuasion and grace, and inspired him with musical and voluntary numbers: she saw more—

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven—
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven."

His visiter assured him that the wealth of Potosi, or the regard of monarchs, could not at all equal the pleasure he would feel as a rustic poet, and entreated him to fan the tuneful flame, preserve his dignity, and trust for protection to the universal plan of the Creator:—

"'And wear thou this,'—she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head;
The polish'd leaves and berries red
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away."

Frequent bursts of religious feeling, and a fine spirit of morality, are visible in much that Burns wrote; yet only one of his poems is expressly dedicated to devotion—"The Cotter's Saturday Night." The origin of this noble strain is related by his brother:—"Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God,' used by a decent sober head of a family, introducing family worship. The hint of the plan and title of the poem were taken from Fergusson's 'Farmer's Ingle.' When Robert had not some pleasure in view, in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons (those precious breathing times to the labouring part of the community), and enjoyed such Sundays as would make us regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the Author repeat 'the Cotter's Saturday Night.'"

The poem is a picture of cottage devotion, by a hand more solicitous about accuracy than effect; for no one knew better than Burns that invention could not heighten, nor art embellish, a scene in which man holds intercourse with heaven. His natural good taste told him that his work-day burning impetuosity of language, and intrepid freedom of illustration, were unsuitable here; he calmed down his style into an earnest and touching simplicity, which has been mistaken by critics for tameness; but the strength of the poem is proved by the numerous and beautiful images, all of a devotional character, which it impresses on the mind. Religion is the leading feature of the whole; but love in its virgin state, and patriotism in its purity, mingle with it, and give a gentle tinge, rather than a decided colour to the performance. The scene is peculiar to Scotland. With what natural art the Poet introduces us to the Cotter, and to his happy home, and gradually prepares us, by a succession of solemn images, for the opening of the Bible and the pouring out of prayer!

The winter day is darkening into night, the blackening trains of crows seek the pine-tree tops, and the toil-worn cotter lays together his spades and hoes, and, "hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend," walks homewards over the moor:—

"At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, todlin', stacher through,
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and glee,
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnilie;
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil."

Presently the elder children, released by Saturday night from their weekly servitude among the neighbouring farmers, come "drapping in;" and Jenny, their eldest hope, now woman grown, shews a "braw new gown," or puts her wages into her parents' hands, to aid them, should they require it. Amid them the anxious mother sits, and, with her needle and shears,

"Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new,
The father mixes a' with admonition due."

The admonition of this good man to his children is, to be obedient to those above them; to mind their labours, nor be idle when unobserved; and chiefly to fear the Lord, and duly, morn and night, implore his aid and counsel. While this is going on, a gentle rap is heard at the door, and a strappan youth, who "takes the mother's e'e," is introduced by Jenny as a neighbour lad, who, among other things, had undertaken to see her safely home. The visit is well taken, for he is neither wild nor worthless, but come of honest parents, and is, moreover, blate and bashful, and for inward joy can scarce behave himself. The mother knows well what makes him so grave; the father converses about horses and ploughs, while the supper-table is spread, and milk from her only

cow, and a "well-hained cheese," of a peculiar flavour, and a twelvemonth old, "sin lint was in the bell," are placed by the frugal and happy mother before the lothful stranger.

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

The canker-tooth of the most envious criticism cannot well fasten on a work in every respect so perfect; nor, in expatiating upon it, are we going out of the direct line of biography: it is known to be, in part, a picture of the household of William Burness. From pictures of national manners and sentiment we must turn to matters more personal.

Of the maidens of Kyle, who contributed by their charms of mind, or person, to the witchery of the love songs of Burns, I can give but an imperfect account. The young woman who "had pledged her soul to meet him in the field of matrimony, yet jilted him with peculiar circumstances of mortification," he has not named; and I suspect her charms, real or imaginary, have remained unsung. The Tibbie who scorned the advances of the Poet, and "spak na, but gade by like stoure," was a neighbouring laird's daughter, with a portion of two acres of peat-moss, and twenty pounds Scots. The Peggy who inspired some of his early lyrics was the sister of a Carrick farmer, a girl prudent as well as beautiful. The Nannie, who lived among the mosses near the Lugar, was a farmer's daughter, Agnes Fleming by name, and charmed unconsciously the sweet song of "My Nannie O" from him, by the elegance of her person and the melody of her voice. "Green grow the Rashes," was a general tribute paid to the collective charms of the lasses of Kyle; there were few with whom he had not held tryste

"Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Some of those maidens were but, perhaps, the chance inspirers of his lyric strains. "Highland Mary," and "Mary in Heaven," of whom he has so passionately sung, was a native of Ardrossan. Those who think that poetry embalms high names alone, ladies of birth and rank, must prepare to be disappointed, for Mary Campbell was a peasant's daughter, and lived, when she captivated the Poet, in the humble situation of dairy-maid in "The Castle of Montgomery." That she was beautiful, we have other testimony than that of Burns: her charms attracted gazers, if not wooers, and she was exposed to the allurements of wealth. She withstood all temptation, and returned the affection of the Poet with the fervour of innocence and youth. "After a pretty long trial," says Burns, "of the most ardent, reciprocal affection, we met, by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot on the banks of the Ayr, where we spent a day in taking a farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of the autumn following, she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed, when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to her grave in a few days, before I could even learn of her illness."—"This adieu was performed," says Cromek, "in a striking and moving way; the lovers stood on each side of a small brook, they laved their hands in the stream, and, holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. They parted never to meet again!"

The Bible on which they vowed their vows was lately in the possession of the sister of Mary Campbell, at Ardrossan. On the first volume is written by the hand of Burns: "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely; I am the Lord — *Leviticus*, chap. xix., v. 12." On the second volume, the same hand has written: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.—*St. Matthew*, chap. v., v. 33." And on the blank leaves of both volumes is impressed his mark as a mason, and also signed below, "Robert Burns, Mossgiel." These are touching insertions, but not more so than the verses in which he has embodied the parting scene:—

"How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary!"

To the same affectionate young creature, Burns addressed a strain of scarcely inferior beauty, beginning with

"Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?"

Nor did he forget her worth in after-life; his heart and fancy frequently travelled back to early scenes of joy and sorrow. A tress of her hair is still preserved: it is very long and very light and shining. Who the Mary Morison was on whom he wrote one of his earliest songs, I have not been able to discover; nor do I know the name of the heroine of "Cessnock Banks." Their beauty seems like that of many others, to have passed suddenly over him, touching his fancy without affecting his heart. The Eliza,

from whom he seems so loth to part, in one of his songs, was, I am told by John Galt, a relative of his, and less beautiful than witty.

To the charms of Jean Armour I have already alluded. This young woman, the daughter of a devout man and master-mason, lived in Mauchline, and was distinguished less for the beauty of her person, than for the grace of her dancing and the melody of her voice. Burns seems to have become attached to her soon after the loss of his Highland Mary. In one of his joyous moments, he warned the maidens of Mauchline against reading inflammatory novels. —"Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons" served only as snares, he said, for their innocence:—

> "Such witching books are baited hooks
> For rakish rooks, like Rob Mossgiel."

Who those maidens were he tells us in rhyme:—

> "In Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
> The pride of the place and its neighbourhood a';—
> Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
> In Lon'on or Paris they 'd gotten it a'.
>
> —Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
> Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw;
> There 's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,
> But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'."

How the Poet and his Jean became acquainted is easily imagined by those who know the facilities for meetings of the young, which fairs, races, dances, weddings, house-heatings, kirn-suppers, and bleaching scenes on burn-banks afford; of the growth of affection between them it is less easy to give an account; we must trace it by the uncertain light of his poetry.

[John Blane,* who was for four years and a half farm-servant in the Burns' family at Lochlea and Mossgiel, relates the following interesting circumstances respecting the attachment of the poet to Miss Armour:—There was a singing school at Mauchline, which Blane attended. Jean Armour was also a pupil, and he soon became aware of her talents as a vocalist. He even contracted a kind of attachment to this young woman, though only such as a country lad of his degree might entertain for the daughter of a substantial country mason. One night there was a *rocking* at Mossgiel, where a lad named Ralph Sillar sung a number of songs in what was considered a superior style. When Burns and Blane had retired to their usual sleeping place in the stable-loft, the former asked the latter what he thought of Sillar's singing, to which Blane answered that the lad thought so much of it himself, and had so many airs about it, that there was no occasion for others expressing a favourable opinion—yet, he added, "I would not give Jean Armour for a score of him." "You are always talking of this Jean Armour," said Burns, "I wish you could contrive to bring me to see her." Blane readily consented to do so, and next evening, after the plough was loosed, the two proceeded to Mauchline for that purpose. Burns went into a public-house, and Blane went into the singing school, which chanced to be kept in the floor above. When the school was dismissing, Blane asked Jean Armour if she would come to see Robert Burns, who was below, and anxious to speak to her. Having heard of his poetical talents, she said she would like much to see him, but was afraid to go without a female companion. This difficulty being overcome by the frankness of a Miss Morton—the Miss Morton of the Six Mauchline Belles—Jean went down to the room where Burns was sitting. "From that time," (Blane adds very naïvely) "I had little of the company of Jean Armour."]

In the "Epistle of Davie" he alludes to Jean Armour by name, and calls her his own; in the "Vision" he compliments the Muse of Kyle by comparing her clean, straight, and taper limbs to those of his bonny Jean; and, in one of his lyrics, he speaks of the sighs and vows which have passed between them among the sequestered hills. It would seem, however, that during the season of their courtship the Poet felt less sure of the continuance of her affection than he had looked for, and something like change may be inferred from his omitting a verse in the "Address to the Deil," in which he likened Eve to Jean Armour:—

> "A dancin', sweet, young, handsome quean,
> Wi' guileless heart."

Gilbert charges his brother with seeing charms in some of the maidens of Kyle which others could not observe; but that may be said of all beautiful things. The ladies whom he celebrated, in the latter days of his inspiration, were —some of them at least—eminently lovely; and we all know that he has imputed no more merit to his Jean than what she possessed. Burns assured Professor Walker that his first desire to excel as a poet arose from the influence of the tender passion; and he informed others that all

[* This individual is now (1838) residing at Kilmarnock. With Robert Burns, who was eight years his senior, he slept for a long time in the same bed, *in the stable loft*, at Mossgiel. Burns had a little deal table with a drawer in it, which he kept constantly beside the bed, with a small desk on the top of it. The best of his poems were here written during the hours of rest; the table-drawer being the depository in which he kept them. The "Cotter's Saturday Night," the "Lament," and the "Vision," were thus composed in the poor garret over a small farmer's stable! He used to employ Blane to read the poems to him, immediately after their composition, that he might be able the more effectually to detect faults in them. When dissatisfied with a particular passage, he would stop the reading, make an alteration, and then desire his companion to proceed. Blane was often wakened by him during the night, that he might serve him in this capacity. The bard of Kyle was a most rigid critic of his own compositions, and burned many with which he was displeased.

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the heroines of his songs were real, and not imaginary. He dealt in

"No idly feign'd poetic pains,
No fabl'd tortures quaint and tame."

As the Poet rose, and the lover triumphed, the farmer sunk. The farm of Mossgiel lies high, on a cold, wet bottom. During the first four years of the lease, instead of kindly and congenial seasons, the springs were frosty and late, the summers moist and cold; and to this the Poet glances when he makes the old dame, in Halloween, relate her experiences:—

"The simmer had been cauld and wat,
And stuff was unco green."

Frosty springs and late cold summers could not be foreseen, but any one might have known high lying land on a wet bottom. Seasons in which the sun is almost scorching other grounds are most congenial for such soils, and no one should venture upon a farm which requires something like a miracle in the weather to render it productive. That Burns took pleasure in the labours of agriculture we have the assurance of many a voice: he often alludes to the holding of the plough, the turning of a handsome furrow; and he rejoices, too, in the growing corn, sees it fall before the sickle, with something of a calculating eye, and raises the rick, and coats it over with broom against sleet and snow, with all the foresight of a farmer. Of his prowess with the flail, he says:—

"The thresher's weary flinging tree
The lee-lang day had tir'd me."

And Gilbert says, with the scythe Robert excelled all competitors: he had the sleight which is necessary with strength and activity. In ploughing he was likewise skilful: in the "Farmer's Address to his Mare," evidently alluding to himself, he says:—

"Aft thee and I in aught-hours gaun,
In guid March weather,
Hae turned sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither."

Elsewhere the Poet speaks of his toil in committing the seed-corn to the furrow, and makes the muse plead it as an excuse for declining labouring on Parnassus in the month of April:—

"Forjeskit sair, wi' weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing through amang the naigs
Their ten-hours bite,
My akwart Muse sair pleads and begs
I wadna write."

Of his farming establishment he gives us some insight, in his facetious inventory to the surveyor of the taxes: it is pleasing to go to the homestead of even the cold and ungenial Mossgiel, and look at the "gudes, and gear, and graith," with Burns for our guide:—

"Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I have four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle.
My lan-afore's a gude auld has-been,
An' wight and wilfu' a' his days been.
My lan-ahin's a weel gaun fillie;
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie.
An' your auld burro' mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime.
My fur-ahin's a worthy beast
As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd.
The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,
A damn'd red-wud Kilburnie blastie!
Forbye a cowt, o' cowts the wale,
As ever ran afore a tail."

Of his milk-cows and calves, ewes and lambs, the mandate required no specification; the Poet proceeds to his farming implements: they are far from numerous:—

"Wheel carriages I ha'e but few,
Three carts, an' twa are feckly new;
An auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
Ae leg and baith the trams are broken."

Ploughs, harrows, shel-bands, rollers, spades, hoes, and fanners were not taxed, and are omitted, which I am sorry for; we come now to the members of his household:—

"For men I've three mischievous boys,
Run deils for rantin' and for noise;
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t' other,
Wee Davoc hauds the nowt in fother."

Nor is the Bard unmindful of maintaining rule and spreading information amongst his menials:—

"I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
An' aften labour them completely;
And aye on Sundays duly, nightly,
I on the questions targe them tightly."

With respect to maid-servants, as his mother and sisters managed the in-door economy of the house, he had no occasion for any: he desired besides, he said, to be kept out of temptation; neither had he a wife, and as for children, one more had been sent to him than he desired:—

"My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddie in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace."

Burns saw in the failure of the farm the coming ruin of his mother's household, and, despairing of success in agriculture, revived a notion which he had long entertained of going out as a sort of steward to the plantations, a situation which, for a small salary, requires the presence of many high qualities. Nor did he take this resolution one moment too soon: his poetic account of his condition and sufferings is not at all poetical:—

"To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
For his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree."

But bodily discomfort was not all: he might,

to use his own language, have braved the bitter blast of misfortune, which, long mustering over his head, was about to descend; but sorrows of a tender nature, from which there was no escape, came pouring upon him in a flood.

This part of the Poet's history has been painted variously: delicacy towards the living, and respect for the dead, seemed to call for gentle handling; but this could not always be obtained; for rude hands were but too ready to aggravate the outline, and darken the colours. The courtship between Burns and Jean Armour continued for several years; and there is no question, had fortune permitted, but that they would have been man and wife the first year of their acquaintance. But Burns was not poor only—he had no chance of becoming rich, and the day of marriage was placed at the mercy of fortune. There were other obstacles: Jean was not only the daughter of a man rigid and devout, but the favourite child of one of the believers in the glory of the Old Light. Her father discountenanced the addresses which "a profane scoffer" and "irreligious rhymer" was making to his child, and the lovers, denied the sanction of paternal care, and the shelter of the domestic roof, had recourse to stolen meetings under the cloud of night, to twilight interviews under the green-wood tree; to the solace of "a cannie hour at e'en," and those "sighs and vows among the knowes" of which the Poet has sung with so much passion. In protracted courtship there is always danger; prudence seldom takes much care of the young and the warm-hearted: Jean was not out of her teens, and thought more of her father's ungentleness than of her own danger; the Poet's respect for sweetness and innocence protected her for a while—but he was doomed to feel what he afterwards sung:—

"Wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
Wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?"

These convoyings home in the dark, and meetings under "the milk-white thorn," ended in the Poet being promised to be made a father before he had become a husband. This, to one so destitute and utterly poor as Burns, was a stunning event: but that was not the worst;—the father of Jean Armour heard, with much anguish, of his favourite daughter's condition; and when, on her knees before him, she implored forgiveness, and shewed the marriage lines—as the private acknowledgment of marriage, without the sanction of the kirk, is called—his anguish grew into anger which overflowed all bounds, and heeded neither his daughter's honour nor her husband's fame. He snatched her marriage certificate from her, threw it into the fire, and commanded her to think herself no longer the wife of the Poet. It must be accepted as a proof of paternal power that Jean trembled and obeyed: she forgot that Burns was still her husband in the sight of Heaven, and according to the laws of man: she refused to see him, or hearken to aught he could say; and, in short, was ruled in everything by the blind hatred of her father.

[Another event occurred to add to the torments of the unhappy poet. Jean, to avoid the immediate pressure of her father's displeasure, went about the month of May (1786) to Paisley, and took refuge with a relation of her mother, one Andrew Purdie, a wright. There was at Paisley a certain Robert Wilson, a good looking young weaver, a native of Mauchline, and who was realising wages to the amount of perhaps three pounds a-week by his then flourishing profession. Jean Armour had danced with this "gallant weaver" at the Mauchline dancing-school balls, and, besides her relative Purdie, she knew no other person in Paisley. Being in much need of a small supply of money, she found it necessary to apply to Mr. Wilson, who received her kindly, although he did not conceal that he had a suspicion of the reason of her visit to Paisley. When the reader is reminded that village life is not the sphere in which high-wrought and romantic feelings are most apt to flourish, he will be prepared in some measure to learn that Robert Wilson not only relieved the necessities of the fair applicant, but formed the wish to possess himself of her hand. He called for her several times at Purdie's, and informed her that, if she should not become the wife of Burns, he would engage himself to none while she remained unmarried. Mrs. Burns long after assured a female friend that she never gave the least encouragement to Wilson; but, nevertheless, his visits occasioned some gossip, which soon found its way to Mauchline, and entered the soul of the poet like a demoniac possession. He now seems to have regarded her as lost to him for ever, and that not purely through the objections of her relations, but by her own cruel and perjured desertion of one whom she acknowledged as her husband. These particulars are requisite to make us fully understand much of what Burns wrote at this time, both in prose and verse. Long afterwards, he became convinced that Jean, by no part of her conduct with respect to Wilson, had given him just cause for jealousy: it is not improbable that he learned in time to make it the subject of sport, and wrote the song, "Where Cart rins rowing to the sea," in jocular allusion to it. But for months—and it is distressing to think that these were the months during which he was putting his matchless poems for the first time to press—he conceived himself the victim of a faithless woman, and life was to him, as he himself describes it,

——— "a weary dream,
The dream of ane that never wauks." CHAMBERS.]

What the Poet thought of all this we have abundance of testimony. Though his indignation against Mr. Armour could not but be high, it is to his honour that he refrained from giving him further pain than he had inflicted already: he spoke, too, of Jean, more in sorrow than in anger. In the first outburst of passion, on finding that she refused to call herself his wife, and had allowed her marriage lines to be burnt, he indulged in a sort of bitter mirth; and, in a poem of great merit, and greater freedom of expression, sang of the vexation which Kyle and her maidens must feel at parting with one who could doubly soothe them with love-making and song. He alludes to the cause of his departure to the West Indies—

"He saw Misfortune's cauld nor-west,
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A Jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea."

He speaks, too, of his way of life, and accounts for the poverty of a poet with a clear income of seven pounds a year!—

"He ne'er was gi'en to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding,
He dealt it free!
The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the sea."

This mirthful mood did not last long; there is little gaiety in his letter to David Bryce, of June 12th, 1786.—"I am still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say in the place of hope. What poor ill-advised Jean thinks of her conduct, I don't know; but one thing I do know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored, a woman more than I did her; and, to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all. My poor dear unfortunate Jean! It is not the losing her that makes me so unhappy, but for her sake I feel most severely: I foresee she is in the road to, I am afraid, eternal ruin. May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul forgive her; and may his grace be with her and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. I have tried often to forget her; I have run into all kinds of dissipation and riots, mason-meetings, drinking-matches, and other mischief, to drive her out of my head, but all in vain. And now for a grand cure: the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then farewell, dear old Scotland! and farewell, dear ungrateful Jean! for never, never will I see you more." In this touching letter the Poet sets off his own sufferings against Jean Armour's shame; and we may calculate their depth and acuteness from his looking on her as ungrateful.

He gave vent to the same feeling in the most pathetic of all modern poems, "The Lament for the unfortunate Issue of a Friend's Amour;" every stanza is most exquisitely mournful:—

"No idly-feign'd poetic pains—
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft-attested Pow'rs above,
The promis'd father's tender name—
These were the pledges of my love!"

The account rendered by Gilbert, which makes Robert consent to the destruction of the marriage lines, is at least doubtful. In truth there was much anguish on all sides; and, condemning the stern father as we do, we cannot help reverencing the feeling which sacrificed his daughter's peace in this world, in the belief that he was securing happiness for her in the next. That he doubted her constancy, I have heard affirmed by those who had an opportunity of knowing; and, to remove temptation from her path, he acquiesced in the Poet's resolution to push his fortune in Jamaica; though there is no foundation, perhaps, for the surmise that he more than tolerated the parish authorities to pursue Burns, according to law, for the maintenance of the promised babe, in order to hasten his departure. This is, nevertheless, countenanced by the circumstance of his ability to keep the child. Had he promised this, the Poet would not have been obliged to skulk "from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a gaol;" and he means more than the usual parochial authorities, when he says—"Some ill-advised persons had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels."

[In this dark period, or immediately before it, the poet signed an instrument, in anticipation of his immediately leaving the kingdom, by which he devised all property of whatever kind he might leave behind, including the copyright of his poems, to his brother Gilbert, in consideration of the latter having undertaken to support his daughter Elizabeth, the issue of "Elizabeth Paton in Largieside." Intimation of this instrument was publicly made at the Cross of Ayr, two days after, by William Chalmers, writer. If he had been upon better terms with the Armours, it seems unlikely that he would have thus devised his property without a respect for the claims of his offspring by Jean.

After this we hear no more of the legal severities of Mr. Armour—the object of which was, not to abridge the liberty of the unfortunate Burns, but to drive him away from the country, so as to leave Jean more effectually disengaged. The Poems now appeared, and probably had some effect in allaying the hostility of the old

man towards their author. It would at least appear that, at the time of Jean's accouchement, the "skulking" had ceased, and the parents of the young woman were not so cruel as to forbid his seeing her.

At this time, Blane had removed from Mossgiel to Mauchline, and become servant to Mr. Gavin Hamilton; but Burns still remembered his old acquaintance. When, in consequence of information sent by the Armours as to Jean's situation, the poet came from Mossgiel to visit her, he called in passing at Mr. Hamilton's, and asked John to accompany him to the house. Blane went with him to Mr. Armour's, where, according to his recollection, the bard was received with all desirable civility. Jean held up a pretty female infant to Burns, who took it affectionately in his arms, and, after keeping it a little while, returned it to the mother, asking the blessing of God Almighty upon her and her infant. He was turning away to converse with the other people in the room, when Jean said, archly, "But this is not all—here is another baby," and handed him a male child, which had been born at the same time. He was greatly surprised, but took that child too for a little while into his arms, and repeated his blessing upon it.* (This child was afterwards named Robert, and still lives: the girl was named Jean, but only lived fourteen months.) The mood of the melancholy poet then changed to the mirthful, and the scene was concluded by his giving the ailing lady a hearty caress, and rallying her on this promising beginning of her history as a mother.

It would appear, from the words used by the poet on this occasion, that he was not without hope of yet making good his matrimonial alliance with Jean. This is rendered the more likely by the evidence which exists of his having, about this time, entertained a confident hope of obtaining an excise appointment, through his friends Hamilton and Aiken; in which case he would have been able to present a respectable claim upon the countenance of the Armours. But this prospect ended in disappointment; and there is reason to conclude that, in a very short time after the accouchement, he was once more forbidden to visit the house in which his children and *all but wife* resided. There was at this time a person named John Kennedy, who travelled the district on horseback as a mercantile agent, and was on intimate terms with Burns. One day, as he was passing Mossgiel, Burns stopped him, and made the request that he would return to Mauchline with a present for his "poor wife." Kennedy consented, and the poet hoisted upon the pommel of the saddle a bag filled with the delicacies of the farm. He proceeded to Mr. Armour's house, and requested permission to see Jean, as the bearer of a message and a present from Robert Burns. Mrs. Armour violently protested against his being admitted to an interview, and bestowed upon him sundry unceremonious appellations for being the friend of such a man. She was, however, overruled in this instance by her husband, and Kennedy was permitted to enter the apartment where Jean was lying. He had not been there many minutes, when he heard a rushing and screaming in the stair, and, immediately after, Burns burst into the room, followed closely by the Armours, who seemed to have exhausted their strength in endeavouring to repel his intrusion. Burns flew to the bed, and, putting his cheek to Jean's, and then in succession to those of the slumbering infants, wept bitterly. The Armours, it is added by Kennedy, who has himself related the circumstances,† remained unaffected by his distress; but whether he was allowed to remain for a short time, or immediately after expelled, is not mentioned. After hearing this affecting anecdote of Burns, "The Lament" may verily appear as arising from

> "No idly feigned poetic pains."‡]

Amid all these miseries of mind and sufferings of body, Burns brought out that volume which first told the world that a new and mighty poet had arisen in the land. This, though forced from him by "the luckless star which ruled his lot," had been often present to his contemplation. He resorted to it not so much to gratify his love of fame, as with the hope that the publication would bring money enough to convey him over the Atlantic; nor were friends wanting to aid him in this very moderate desire. It is to the credit of the personal merit of Burns, and to the honour of his associates, that they shrunk not from his side in the trying hour of adversity. Among these, Gavin Hamilton; Robert Aikin, writer, Ayr; John Ballantyne, banker, Ayr; Robert Muir, merchant, Kilmarnock; and William Parker, merchant, Kilmarnock; were the most active and conspicuous. Parker alone subscribed for thirty-five copies. There is little merit in discovering and befriending genius when Fame is sounding her trumpet, and crying, "Behold the man whom the king delighteth to honour!" but to mark talents, and aid them, when the possessor is struggling out of darkness into light, shews either great generosity or a fine judgment, or both. Thus supported, he was enabled to enter into terms with Wilson, a printer, in Kilmarnock. The Poet undertook to supply manuscript, walk daily into Kilmarnock to correct the press, and pay all the expenses incident to printing six hundred copies.

* [Ultimately, while Jean continued to nurse the female baby, the boy was transferred to the charge of the family at Mossgiel, where poverty condemned him to be reared upon the milk of a young cow.]

† [In a work entitled Cobbett's Magazine.] ‡ CHAMBERS.

Of what passed in the mind of Burns at this moment, we have his own account to Moore :— "I weighed," said he, "my productions as impartially as was in my power. I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver, or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits. To know myself had been all along my constant study; I weighed myself alone, I balanced myself with others, I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation, where the lights and shades in character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, having got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty." "Wee Johnnie," the printer, the body without a soul of the poet's epigram, shrewdly remarked that a poem of a grave nature would be better for beginning with: Burns acted on the hint, and, in walking between Kilmarnock and Mossgiel, composed, or rather completed, the "Twa Dogs." At that period, ruin had him so effectually in the wind, that even food became scanty; a piece of oat-cake and a bottle of two-penny ale made his customary dinner, when correcting the first edition of his immortal works, and of this he was not always certain.

In July, 1786, the poems of Burns made their appearance; he introduced them with a preface, intimating his condition in life, and claiming for them the protection of his country. "Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw, in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toils and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world—always an alien scene—a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward. 'Humility,' says Shenstone, 'has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!' If any critic catches at the word genius, the author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities; otherwise his publishing, in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which he hopes his worst enemy will ever give him." The heart-warm welcome which his poems received in his own district, fulfilled the hopes of the Poet; all read who could obtain the book, and all who read applauded; even the children of the Old Light admitted that he was a wondrous rhymer to be a profane person. The whole impression was soon disposed of; the fears of "Wee Johnnie," the printer, anent remuneration, were allayed, and twenty pounds and odd remained in the pockets of the wondering bard, after defraying all expenses. The first use he made of his good fortune was to renew his application for a situation in the West Indies, and lay aside a sum sufficient to waft him over the sea. With the desire of keeping such a genius at home, his steadfast friends, Hamilton and Aiken, again sought to obtain him an appointment in the excise—an evil which awaited him on a later day.

With some, the rising of this western star in poetry was looked for; his poems in manuscript had been widely circulated in Ayr-shire, but to Scotland at large his appearance was unexpected; and had a July sun risen on a December morning, the unwonted light could not have given greater surprise. The fame of the bard of Mauchline flew east, west, north, and south. A love of poetry belongs as much to the humble classes of the north as to the high; and to people who had much of Ramsay and Fergusson by heart, the more lofty and passionate poetry of Burns could not fail to be welcome. The milkmaid sung his songs, the ploughmen and shepherds repeated his poems, while the old and the sagacious quoted his verses in conversation, glad to find that matters of fancy might be made useful. My father, who was fond of poetry, procured the volume from a Cameronian clergyman, with this remarkable admonition, "Keep it out of the way of your children, John, lest ye catch them, as I caught mine, reading it on the sabbath."

"It is hardly possible," says Heron, "to express with what eager admiration and delight the poems were everywhere received. They eminently possessed all those qualities which can contribute to render any literary work quickly and permanently popular. They were written in a phraseology, of which all the powers were universally felt; and which being at once antique, familiar, and now rarely written, was hence fitted to serve all the dignified and picturesque uses of poetry, without making it unintelligible. The imagery, the sentiments, were at once faithfully natural, and irresistibly impressive and interesting. Those topics of satire and scandal in which the rustic delights, that humorous delineation of character, and that witty association of ideas, familiar and striking, yet not naturally allied to one another, which has force to shake his sides with laughter; those fancies of superstition at which he still wonders and trembles; those affecting

sentiments and images of true religion, which are at once dear and awful to his heart, were represented by Burns with all a poet's magic power. Old and young, high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, all were alike delighted, agitated, and transported."

To many copies of his works the Poet added other attractions: he caused blank leaves to be inserted, on which he wrote such favourite sallies of love or humour as he had refrained from printing; or, more solicitous still to please, inscribed neat and complimentary lines, addressed to those who, by their taste and station, might either feel his merit, or be disposed to patronise him. Of those whom he sought to propitiate, one of the most eminent was Dugald Stewart: during the summer months that the professor and his first lady lived at Catrine, Burns was sometimes their guest; and much as they were pleased with his verses, they were still more so with his conversation, which was unaffected and manly. During one of his visits he was introduced to Lord Daer, and as this seems to have been the first time he had met a lord, he recorded the event in rhymes equally vigorous and untranslateable; his emotions are described as no one but himself could have described them:—

"But oh! for Hogarth's matchless power!
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
An' how he star'd an' stammer'd,
When goavan, as if led wi' branks,
An' stumpan on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd."

His poems touched the gentlest hearts. Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, a lady accomplished as well as kind, was one of the first to admire them, and to renew her acquaintance with the author; neither her kindness, nor that of the Stewarts of Catrine, were forgotten. Upon the robe of Coila he depicted perhaps too many complimentary things: in the "Brigs of Ayr" he is more select:—

"Next followed Courage, with his martial stride,
From where the Feal wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair;
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine, their long-lov'd abode."

Nor did Burns think this enough: the woods of Catrine are mentioned in one or more of his succeeding songs, and the Lady of the Towers of Stair is remembered, in a lyric of no common beauty. He imagines himself straying on the banks of Afton Water, and perceives the heroine asleep among the flowers on its side. He then addresses the stream, and promises to sing a song to its honour if it will flow softly, nor disturb the repose of one so sweet and beautiful. The lady understood the forward ways of the muse, and smiled. Mrs. Scott, of Wauchope-house, a painter and poetess, in a rhyming letter of considerable ease and gaiety, intimated her admiration of the "Cantie, witty, rhyming ploughman." In his answer Burns alludes to his aspirations, when "beardless, young, and blate," with great felicity:—

"Even then a wish, I mind its power,
A wish, that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least."

But the friendship which the various biographers of Burns seem to be most solicitous about is that of Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop. That lady, the daughter of Sir Thomas Wallace, of Craigie, was proud of her descent from the race of Elderslie, and proud of her acquirements, which were considerable. Nor should we leave unmentioned that she had some talent for rhyme. She had been ailing, and the first advantage which she took of returning health was to read the poems of the Ayr-shire ploughman. She was struck with the beauty, natural and religious, of the "Cotter's Saturday Night."—"The Poet's description of the simple cottagers," she told Gilbert Burns, "operated on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, repelling the demon *ennui*, and restoring her to her wonted harmony and satisfaction." An express, sent sixteen miles, for half-a-dozen copies of the book, and an invitation to Dunlop-house, attested her sincerity. Nor was the Poet less sincere in his answer—he admired her illustrious ancestor.—"In my boyish days," he observes, "I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur:—

"Syne to the Leglen wood when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half-a-dozen miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect—for even then I was a rhymer—that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits." All this was in unison with the feelings of the lady as well as with his own. From this period we must date a friendship which did not close with the Poet's life, and to which we owe many of his most dignified and happy letters.

But the notice of lords, the attention of professors, and the kindness of beauty, were empty, though honourable, things; the twenty pounds, which his speculation in verse brought, diminished rather than increased, and he felt, with a darkening spirit, that he could not live on applause. It never seems to have occurred to any one of his wealthy admirers that he was in a

state of destitution, and that many places of profit existed which he could fill with honour. He who is invited to feast, at a distance, with the powerful and the polite—who has to walk seven miles of rough road to the dinner-table—is expected to write songs on the beautiful—be witty with the witty, and at midnight return to his blanket and his straw, must be considered as having earned his dinner fairly—and this happened often to Burns. All that his poetry brought him was barren applause; and when he consulted "Wee Johnnie" about publishing a second edition, the printer demurred, which so incensed the Poet that he would not speak again on the subject, and refused the generous offers of several of his first and best friends, to subscribe for copies enow to secure Wilson against loss. He now looked seriously to the West Indies, procured the situation of overseer on an estate in Jamaica, belonging to Dr. Douglas, and prepared for departure. Of this all his friends seem to have been aware, but no one interposed. It was now the middle of November, and the sound which his poems had raised in the country began to die away.

There was still one family of influence in the district to whom Burns had not been introduced; and as no one had tried to do this for him, he now resolved to do it for himself. In the preceding July, it seems, he had accidentally met Miss Alexander, of Ballochmyle, a young lady of great beauty, among her native woods on the banks of Ayr. How the river banks looked in those days I know not, but the bard instantly clothed them with flowers, gave odorous dews to the grass, a richer incense to the fields of beans, a sweeter song to the thrush, and a brighter sunshine to the tree-tops; and into this natural shrine introduced his new object of adoration, under the name of "The Lass of Ballochmyle." Neither elegance of thought nor of expression were wanting to render the compliment acceptable:—

"With careless step I onward stray'd
My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,
When musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy;
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like nature's vernal smile,
Perfection whisper'd, passing by,
'Behold the lass of Ballochmyle!'"

As he proceeds with his song, the Bard recollects that loveliness is sent into the world for other purposes than to be gazed at, and exclaims, much to the distress of gentle critics and fastidious spinsters—who looked, it seems, for a display of chivalry instead of nature:—

"O! had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Tho' shelter'd in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotland's plain,
Thro' weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toil,
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonny lass of Ballochmyle."

He copied this fine lyric out in a fair hand, and sent it to Miss Alexander, accompanied by a letter, the composition of which, it is said, cost him more labour than the song. It has not, however, all the happy ease of the verse. Of the song he says:—"The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *rêveur* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my muse on the banks of Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers pouring their harmony on every hand with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my way, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Such was the scene and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect I spied one of the fairest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye, those visionary bards excepted who hold converse with aërial beings. Had Calumny and Villany taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object. What an hour of inspiration for a poet! it would have raised plain dull historic prose into metaphor and measure. The enclosed song was the work of my return home; and, perhaps, it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene."*

What the lady thought of the song we are not told—what Burns thought of her silence he has informed us. She paid no attention to his effusions, and wounded his self-love by her ungracious neglect. Currie and Lockhart have united in defending the "Lass of Ballochmyle." "Her modesty," says the first, "might prevent her from perceiving that the muse of Tibullus breathed in this nameless poet, and that her beauty was awakening strains destined to immortality on the banks of the Ayr. Burns was at that time little known, and, where known at all, noted rather for the wild strength of his humour than for those strains of tenderness in which he afterwards so much excelled. To the lady herself, his name, perhaps, had never been mentioned."—"His verses," says the latter, "written in commemoration of that passing glimpse of her beauty, are conceived in a strain

* [The exact or direct purpose of this letter has been disguised wilfully, or mistakingly, by Dr. Currie, in consequence of the omission of a concluding sentence, in which the Poet requested Miss Alexander's permission to print the verses in the second edition of his poems. This was an object to which the Poet attached some importance. WILSON.]

of luxurious fervour, which, certainly, coming from a man of Burns' station and character, must have sounded very strangely in a delicate maiden's ear." These remarks might have been spared; the man and his poems were well known to all in the west country long before the 18th of November, 1786: we must not suppose Miss Alexander more fastidious and difficult to please, than Mrs. Stewart of Catrine, Mrs. Stewart of Stair, or Mrs. Dunlop, with whom he was living on terms of friendship before that time. He who had written and published "Man was made to mourn," "The Daisy," "The Mouse," and "The Cotter's Saturday Night," was known for more than the wild strength of his humour; nor can we imagine that any lady of education could feel much alarm at the fervour of the song: Miss Alexander knew that poetry and love are brothers, and that the latter acknowledges no other merit than what is personal. The Poet chose, rather than "raise a mortal to the skies," to "bring an angel down." The heroine lived till lately—but she lived to think the honours of the muse the highest that could be conferred on her; the song, elegantly framed, was hung in her chamber, and was carried with her wherever she travelled.

This was the last of his efforts to obtain notice in his native district. He now wrote to his friends, Hamilton and Aiken, saying, he was afraid that his follies would prevent him from enjoying a situation in the Excise, even if it could be procured; he was pining in secret wretchedness; disappointment, pride, and remorse were settling on his vitals like vultures, and in an hour of social mirth his gaiety was the madness of an intoxicated criminal, under the hands of the executioner.—"All these reasons," he says, "urge me to go abroad, and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances everything that can be laid in the scale against it." He wrote in the same strain to others. This was on the 19th of November; on the 20th he enclosed a copy of "Holy Willie's Prayer" to his comrades, Chalmers and M'Adam, desiring it might be burnt, as a thing abominable and wicked, at the Cross of Ayr; and on the twenty-second, he wrote, as he imagined, the last song he was to measure in Caledonia:—

"The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild, inconstant blast,
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,—
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr."

It was well for the world, and, perhaps, unfortunate for Burns, that, when he had bid farewell to his friends, put his chest on the way to Greenock, and was about to follow, a letter from Dr. Blacklock overthrew all his schemes. The way this came about has something in it of the romantic. Laurie, minister of Loudon, a kind and steadfast friend, sent a copy of the poems to his friend Dr. Blacklock, a middling poet, but a most worthy man, with unbounded kindness of nature and generosity of soul. Blacklock was blind, and, as he could not read for himself, an almost fatal delay took place: the ship was unmooring, and the Poet on the wing, when his opinion of the poems, and the steps which he advised the author to take, reached the hands of Laurie. The letter was instantly forwarded to Burns, who read it with surprise not unmingled with tears. The blind bard was none of your cold formal men who give guarded opinions—he said what he felt; and, as his heart was in the right place, spoke out with a warmth and an ecstasy new in the province of criticism:

"Many instances have I seen," he says, "of nature's force or beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired nor too warmly approved: and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It has been told me, by a gentleman to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed; as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertions of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than anything of the kind which has been published in my memory."—"This encouragement," says Burns, "fired me so much, that away I posted to Edinburgh, without a single acquaintance or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence on my zenith for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. That he was personally unknown to any one of influence in Edinburgh, save Dugald Stewart, and that he took letters of introduction to no one, is perfectly true. Pride had something to do in this. He had begun to feel that a warm dinner and a kind word were to be his chief portion in Kyle; and the silence of one, and the coldness of another, stung him, it is said, deeper than he was willing to allow. He de-

termined to owe his future fortune, whatever it might be, to no one around; he turned his face to Arthur's Seat, and sung with much buoyancy of heart, as he went, a soothing snatch of an old ballad:—

"As I came in by Glenap,
I met with an aged woman,
She bade me cheer up my heart,
For the best of my days was coming."

PART II.—EDINBURGH.

The first appearance of Burns in Edinburgh was humble enough. The money, reserved to waft him to the West Indies, had been laid out on clothes for this new expedition, or on the family at Mossgiel; and, having little in his pocket, he found his way to his friend Richmond, a writer's apprentice, and accepted the offer of a share of his room and bed, in the house of a Mrs. Carfrae, Baxter's-close, Lawnmarket. Though he had taken a stride from the furrowed field into the land of poetry, and abandoned the plough for the harp, he seemed for some days to feel, as in earlier life, unfitted with an aim, and wandered about, looking down from Arthur's Seat, surveying the palace, gazing at the castle, or contemplating the windows of the booksellers' shops, where he saw all works, save the Poems of the Ayr-shire Ploughman. He found his way to the lowly grave of Fergusson, and, kneeling down, kissed the sod: he sought out the house of Allan Ramsay, and, on entering it, took off his hat; and, when he was afterwards introduced to Creech, the bibliopole remembered that he had before heard him inquiring if this had been the shop of the author of "The Gentle Shepherd." In one of these excursions he happened to meet with an Ayr-shire friend, Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield; others say Mr. Dalzell—and some say both—by whom he was introduced to James Earl of Glencairn, who took him by the hand, and with small persuasion prevailed on Creech to become the publisher of the contemplated edition, on terms favourable to Burns. The Poet stipulated to receive one hundred pounds for the copyright of one edition, with the profits of the subscription copies. A prospectus was drawn out, a vast number printed and circulated over the island, and subscriptions came pouring in with a rapidity unknown in the history of Scottish genius.

It is honourable to the patricians of the north that they welcomed the Poet with much cordiality, and subscribed largely; it is honourable to the stately literati of Edinburgh that they not only received their rustic brother gladly into their ranks, but spoke everywhere of his fine genius with undissembled rapture, and introduced him wherever introductions were beneficial: but it is still more honourable to the husbandmen, the shepherds, and the mechanics of Scotland, that, though wages were small, and money scarce, they subscribed for copies in fifties and in hundreds, and thus extended the patronage always the most welcome, since it implies admiration. Of the noblemen, the most active was the Earl of Glencairn: through his influence the association called the Caledonian Hunt, consisting of the chiefs of the northern aristocracy, consented to accept the dedication of the new edition, and to subscribe individually for copies: the gentlemen, too, of the west, proud that their district, long unproductive in high genius, had ceased to be barren, vied with each other in promoting the interest of the Bard of Kyle; while Blair, Robertson, Blacklock, Smith, Fergusson, Stewart, Mackenzie, Tytler, and Lords Craig and Monboddo—all men distinguished in the world of letters, lent their still more effectual aid; nay, some of them carried the subscription-lists in their pockets, and obtained names through all their wide range of acquaintance.

Burns arrived in Edinburgh at the close of November, 1786; and before, as he poetically said, the cry of the cuckoo was heard, no less than two thousand eight hundred and odd copies were subscribed for by fifteen hundred and odd subscribers. His genius was already felt by high and low—lettered and unlettered. The Caledonian Hunt took one hundred copies; Creech took five hundred; the Earl of Eglinton, forty-two; the Duchess of Gordon, twenty-one; the Earl of Glencairn and his Countess, twenty-four; the Scots College at Valladolid, the Scots College at Douay, the Scots College at Paris, the Scots Benedictine Monastery at Ratisbon, severally took copies; Campbell, of Clathick, subscribed for twelve; Douglas, of Cavers, for eight; Dalrymple, of Orangefield, for ten; Dunlop, of Dunlop, for six; Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, for eight; Lord Graham, for twelve; Gray, of Gartcraig, for six; Sir James Hunter Blair, for eight; Hamilton, of Argyle-square, Edinburgh, for eight. Subscriptions for four copies are very numerous: one-half, however of the list, is composed of humble names; nor should the weavers of the west be forgotten. The sons of the shuttle went not more willingly from Kilmarnock to Mauchline Holy Fair, than they poured in their names for their Poet's works.

Of the manners and appearance of Burns in Edinburgh much has been written and said; every step which he took to the right or to the left has been noted; the company which he kept has afforded matter for philosophic speculation, and his sayings and doings have found a place in the memoranda of the learned, and in the memories of the polite. Even when weighed in the balance of acquired taste and artificial manners, the Poet was scarcely found wanting: he was come of a class who think strongly,

speak freely, and act as they think. The natural good manners, which belong to genius, were his; but, accustomed to hold argument with his rustic compeers, and to vanquish them more by rough vigour, than by delicate persuasion, he had some difficulty in schooling down his impetuous spirit, into the charmed circle of conventional politeness. That he sometimes observed and sometimes neglected this, is natural enough: the fervid impatience of his temper hurried him into the van, at times when his post was in the rear. He had too little tolerance for the stately weak and the learnedly dull: and, holding the patent of his own honours immediately from God, he scarcely could be brought to pay homage to honours arising from humbler sources.

But if he refused to be tame in the society of the titled and the learned, he was another being in the company of the fair and the lovely. His poetry at first sprang from love; and, though ambition now claimed its share, the softness and amenity of the purer passion triumphed, and with the lovely he was all pathos and persuasion, gaiety and grace. His look changed, his eye beamed milder, all that was stern or contradictory in his nature vanished when he heard the rustle of approaching silks: charmed himself by beauty, he charmed beauty in his turn. In large companies, the loveliness of the north formed a circle round where he sat; and, with the feathers of duchesses and ladies of high degree fanning his brow, he was all gentleness and attention. The Duchess of Gordon said that Burns, in his address to ladies, was extremely deferential, and always with a turn to the pathetic or the humorous, which won their attention: and added, with much *naïveté*, that she never met with a man whose conversation carried her so completely off her feet. He who was often intractable and fierce, in the presence of man, grew soft and submissive in the company of woman: this was neither unobserved nor unrewarded. When, in his later days, many men looked on the setting of the star of Burns with unconcern or coldness, the fair and the lovely neither slackened in their admiration nor their friendship.

[Dugald Stewart has given us the following account of the manners, character, and conduct of Burns at this period:—"The first time I saw Robert Burns was on the 23d of October, 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayr-shire, together with our common friend Mr. John Mackenzie, surgeon, in Mauchline, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of his acquaintance. I am enabled to mention the date particularly, by some verses which Burns wrote after he returned home, and in which the day of our meeting is recorded. I cannot positively say, at this distance of time, whether, at the period of our first acquaintance, the Kilmarnock edition of his poems had been just published, or was yet in the press. I suspect that the latter was the case, as I have still in my possession copies, in his own hand-writing, of some of his favourite performances; particularly of his verses 'On turning up a Mouse with his Plough,' 'On the Mountain Daisy,' and 'The Lament.' On my return to Edinburgh, I shewed the volume, and mentioned what I knew of the author's history to several of my friends, and, among others, to Mr. Henry Mackenzie, who first recommended him to public notice, in the ninety-seventh number of 'The Lounger.' At this time Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation—not, however, without lamenting that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or gauger in his own country. He came," says the Professor, "to Edinburgh early in the winter: the attentions which he received during his stay in town, from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance, which had struck me so forcibly, when I first saw him in the country: nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance. His dress was perfectly suited to his station—plain and unpretending, with sufficient attention to neatness. If I recollect right, he always wore boots; and, when on more than usual ceremony, buck-skin breeches. His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth, but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened with apparent attention and deference, on subjects, where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance, and his dread of anything approaching to meanness, or servility, rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language, when he spoke in company: more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided, more successfully than most Scotchmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology.

"In the course of the spring (1787), he called on me once or twice, at my request, early in the

morning, and walked with me to Braid Hills, in the neighbourhood of the town, where he charmed me still more by his private conversation, than he had ever done in company. He was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; and I recollect he once told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and worth which they contained. In his political principles he was then a Jacobite; which was, perhaps, owing partly to this, that his father was originally from the estate of Lord Mareschall. Indeed he did not appear to have thought much on such subjects, nor very consistently. He had a very strong sense of religion, and expressed deep regret at the levity with which he had heard it treated occasionally in some convivial meetings which he frequented. I speak of him as he was in the winter of 1786-7; for afterwards we met but seldom, and our conversations turned chiefly on his literary projects, or his private affairs. I do not recollect whether it appears or not from any of your letters to me that you had ever seen Burns.* If you have, it is superfluous for me to add that the idea his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind, exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. Among the poets whom I have happened to know, I have been struck, in more than one instance, with the unaccountable disparity between their general talents, and the occasional inspirations of their more favoured moments. But all the faculties of Burns' mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation, I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities. Among the subjects on which he was accustomed to dwell, the characters of the individuals with whom he happened to meet was plainly a favourite one. The remarks he made on them were always shrewd and pointed, though frequently inclining too much to sarcasm. His praise of those he loved was sometimes indiscriminate and extravagant; but this, I suspect, proceeded rather from the caprice and humour of the moment than from the effects of attachment in blinding his judgment. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding; but to my taste, not often pleasing or happy.

"Notwithstanding various reports I heard, during the preceding winter, of Burns' predilection for convivial, and not very select, society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me, indeed, himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him of any merit in his temperance. I was, however, somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me the first night he spent in my house, after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject."

The remainder of the learned Professor's communication to Dr. Currie is too valuable to be omitted here. "In the summer, 1787, I passed some weeks in Ayr-shire, and saw Burns occasionally I think that he made a pretty long excursion that season to the Highlands, and that he also visited, what Beatty calls, the Arcadean ground of the Tiviot and the Tweed. In the course of the same season I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a Mason-Lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived, and forcibly, as well as fluently, expressed. If I am not mistaken, he told me that, in that village, before going to Edinburgh, he had belonged to a small club of such of the inhabitants as had a taste for books, when they used to converse and debate on any interesting questions that occurred to them in the course of their reading. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution.

"I must not omit to mention, what I have always considered as characteristical in a high degree of true genius, the extreme facility and good-nature of his taste in judging of the compositions of others, where there was any real ground for praise. I repeated to him many passages of English poetry with which he was unacquainted, and have more than once witnessed the tears of admiration and rapture with which he heard them. The collection of songs by Dr. Aiken, which I first put into his hands, he read with unmixed delight, notwithstanding his former efforts in that very difficult species of writing; and I have little doubt that it had some effect in polishing his subsequent compositions.

"In judging of prose, I do not think his taste was equally sound. I once read to him a passage or two in Franklin's Works which I thought very happily executed, upon the model of Addison; but he did not appear to relish or to perceive the beauty which they derived from their exquisite simplicity, and spoke of them with indifference, when compared with the point, and antithesis, and quaintness of Junius.

[* Dr. Currie had seen and conversed with Burns.]

The influence of this taste is very perceptible in his own prose compositions, although their great and various excellencies render some of them scarcely less objects of wonder than his poetical performances. The late Dr. Robertson used to say that, considering his education, the former seemed to him the more extraordinary of the two.

"His memory was uncommonly retentive, at least for poetry, of which he recited to me frequently long compositions with the most minute accuracy. They were chiefly ballads, and other pieces in our Scottish dialect; great part of them (he told me) he had learned in his childhood, from his mother, who delighted in such recitations, and whose poetical taste, rude as it probably was, gave, it is presumable, the first direction to her son's genius.

"Of the more polished verses which accidentally fell into his hands in his early years, he mentioned particularly the recommendatory poems, by different authors, prefixed to 'Hervey's Meditations;'—a book which has always had a very wide circulation among such of the country-people of Scotland as affect to unite some degree of taste with their religious studies. And these poems (although they are certainly below mediocrity) he continued to read with a degree of rapture beyond expression. He took notice of this fact himself, as a proof how much the taste is liable to be influenced by accidental circumstances.

"His father appeared to me, from the account he gave of him, to have been a respectable and worthy character, possessed of a mind superior to what might have been expected from his station in life. He ascribed much of his own principles and feelings to the early impressions he had received from his instructions and example. I recollect that he once applied to *him* (and he added that the passage was a literal statement of fact) the two last lines of the following passage in the 'Minstrel,' the whole of which he repeated with great enthusiasm:—

"Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive;
Shall nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Bid him, though doom'd to perish, hope to live?
Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury, and pain?
No! Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive;
And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright through th' eternal year of love's triumphant reign."

"With respect to Burns' early education I cannot say anything with certainty. He always spoke with respect and gratitude of the schoolmaster who had taught him to read English; and who, finding in his scholar a more than ordinary ardour for knowledge, had been at pains to instruct him in the grammatical principles of the language. He began the study of Latin, but dropped it before he had finished the verbs. I have sometimes heard him quote a few Latin words, such as *omnia vincit amor*, &c., but they seemed to be such as he had caught from conversation, and which he repeated by rote. I think he had a project, after he came to Edinburgh, of prosecuting the study under his intimate friend, the late Mr. Nicol, one of the masters of the grammar-school here; but I do not know that he ever proceeded so far as to make the attempt. He certainly possessed a smattering of French; and, if he had an affectation in anything, it was in introducing occasionally a word or phrase from that language. It is possible that his knowledge in this respect might be more extensive than I suppose it to be; but this you can learn from his more intimate acquaintance. It would be worth while to enquire whether he was able to read the French authors with such facility as to receive from them any improvement to his taste. For my own part I doubt it much, nor would I believe it but on very strong and pointed evidence. If my memory does not fail me, he was well-instructed in arithmetic, and knew something of practical geometry, particularly of surveying. All his other attainments were entirely his own. The last time I saw him was during the winter, 1789-90, when he passed an evening with me at Drumseugh, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where I was then living. My friend Mr. Alison was the only other person in company. I never saw him more agreeable nor interesting."]

Nor is the testimony of Professor Walker less decided; for him, as well as for Burns, Doon had poured all her floods—the rising sun had glinted gloriously over Galston Moors, and snow had lain untrodden on the hills of Ochiltree: he was a native of Kyle, and interested in all that added to its renown. "In conversation Burns was powerful: his conceptions and expressions were of corresponding vigour, and on all subjects were as remote as possible from common-place. Though somewhat authoritative, it was in a way that gave little offence, and was readily imputed to his inexperience in those modes of smoothing dissent, and softening assertion, which are important characteristics of polished manners. After breakfast, I requested him to communicate some of his unpublished pieces, and he recited his farewell song to the Banks of Ayr, introducing it with a description of the circumstances in which it was composed, more striking than the poem itself. He had left Dr. Laurie's family, and on his way home had to cross a wide stretch of solitary moor. His mind was strongly affected by parting for ever with a scene where he had tasted so much elegant and social pleasure. The aspect of nature harmonized with his feelings—it was a lowering and heavy evening; the wind was up, and whistled through the rushes and long spear-grass, which bent before it; the clouds were

driven across the sky, and cold pelting showers, at intervals, added discomfort of body to cheerlessness of mind. His recitation was plain, slow, articulate, and forcible, but without any eloquence of art. He did not always lay the emphasis with propriety, nor did he humour the sentiment by the variations of his voice."

As Heron—a man who rose by the force of his talents, and fell by the keenness of his passions—is the least favourable to the Poet of all his biographers, we may quote him without fear:—"The conversation of Burns was, in comparison with the formal and exterior circumstances of his education, perhaps even more wonderful than his poetry. He affected no soft airs or graceful motions of politeness, which might have ill accorded with the rustic plainness of his native manners. Conscious superiority of mind taught him to associate with the great, the learned, and the gay, without being over-awed into any such bashfulness, as might have made him confused in thought, or hesitating in elocution. In conversation, he displayed a sort of intuitive quickness and rectitude of judgment upon every subject that arose; the sensibility of his heart and the vivacity of his fancy, gave a rich colouring to whatever reasoning he was disposed to advance, and his language in conversation was not at all less happy than his writings; for these reasons he did not fail to please immediately after having been first seen. I remember that the late Dr. Robertson once observed to me, that he had scarcely ever met with any man whose conversation discovered greater vigour and activity of mind than that of Burns."

[The recollections of Mr. John Richmond, writer in Mauchline, respecting Burns' arrival, and the earlier period of his residence, in Edinburgh, are curious. Mr. Richmond, who had been brought up in the office of a country writer, or attorney, and was now perfecting his studies in that of a metropolitan practitioner, occupied a room in the Lawnmarket, at the rent of three shillings a-week. His circumstances, as a youth just entering the world, made him willing to share his apartment and bed with any agreeable companion, who might be disposed to take part in the expense. These terms suited his old Mauchline acquaintance, Burns, who accordingly lived with him, from his arrival in November till his leaving town in May, on his southern excursion. Mr. Richmond mentions that the poet was so knocked up, by his walk from Mauchline to Edinburgh, that he could not leave his room for the next two days. During the whole time of his residence there, his habits were temperate and regular. Much of his time was necessarily occupied in preparing his poems for the press—a task in which, as far as transcription was concerned, Mr. Richmond aided him, when not engaged in his own office duties. Burns, though frequently invited out into company, usually returned at good hours, and went soberly to bed, where he would prevail upon his companion, by little bribes, to read to him till he fell asleep. Mr. Lockhart draws an unfavourable inference from his afterwards removing to the house of his friend Nicol: but for this removal Mr. Richmond supplies a reason which exculpates the bard. During Burns' absence in the south and at Mauchline, Mr. Richmond took in another fellow-lodger; so that, when the poet came back, and applied for re-admission to Mrs. Carfrae's humble menage, he found his place filled up, and was compelled to go elsewhere.

The exterior of Burns, for some time after his arrival in Edinburgh, was little superior to that of his rustic compeers. "What a clod-hopper!" was the descriptive exclamation of a lady to whom he was abruptly pointed out one day in the Lawnmarket. In the course of a few weeks, he got into comparatively fashionable attire—a blue coat with metal buttons, a yellow and blue striped vest (being the livery of Mr. Fox), a pair of buckskins, so tight that he seemed to have grown into them, and top-boots, meeting the buckskins under the knee. His neckcloth, of white cambric, was neatly arranged, and his whole appearance was clean and respectable, though the taste in which he was dressed was still obviously a rustic taste.

Though his habits during the winter of 1786-7 were upon the whole good, he was not altogether exempt from the bacchanalianism which at this period reigned in Edinburgh. Mr. William Nicol of the High School, and Mr. John Gray, City-clerk, were among his most intimate convivial friends. Nicol lived in the top of a house over what is called *Buccleuch Pend*, in the lowest floor of which there was a tavern, kept by a certain Lucky Pringle, having a back entry from the *pend*, through which visiters could be admitted, unwotted of by a censorious world. There Burns was much with Nicol, both before and after his taking up his abode in that gentleman's house. He also attended pretty frequently the meetings of the *Crochallan Fencibles*, at their howff in the Anchor Close; and of Johnnie Dowie's tavern, in Libberton's Wynd, he was also a frequent visiter. Mr. Alexander Cunningham, jeweller, and Mr. Robert Cleghorn, farmer at Saughton Mills, may be said to complete the list of Burns's convival acquaintance in Edinburgh. The intimacy he formed with Mr. Robert Ainslie, then a young writer's apprentice, appears to have been of a different character.

Mr. Dalrymple of Orangefield, and the Hon. Henry Erskine, may be mentioned as individuals who exerted themselves in behalf of Burns, immediately after his arrival in Edinburg. Dr. Adam Fergusson, author of the History of the Roman Republic, may also be added to Dr. Currie's list of his literary and

philosophical patrons. At the house of the latter gentleman, Sir Walter Scott met with Burns, of whom he has given his recollections in the following interesting letter to Mr. Lockhart:—

"As for Burns, I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum.* I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets whom he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sate silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember, which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

> "Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptized in tears."

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or, rather, the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered, that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture; but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school; *i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet, at the same time, with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember, on this occasion, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Fergusson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was, doubtless, national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know any thing I can add to these recollections of forty years since."]

The more generous looked with wonder on the bold Peasant, who had claimed and taken place with the foremost, and who seemed to have endowments of every kind equal to his ambition; while other geniuses, raised by the artificial heat of colleges and schools, glanced with scorn or envy on one who had sprung into fame, through the genial warmth of nature. Henry Mackenzie was not of the latter; as soon as he read the poems of Burns, he perceived that the right inspiration was in them, and recommended them and their author to public notice, in a paper in "The Lounger," written with feeling and truth. His poems discover a tone of feeling, a power and energy of expression, particularly and strongly charac-

teristic of the mind and voice of a poet. The critic perceives, too, passages solemn and sublime, touched, and that not slightly, with a rapt and inspired melancholy: together with sentiments tender, and moral, and elegiac. Of "The Daisy," he says, "I have seldom met with an image more truly pastoral than that of the lark in the second stanza. Such strokes as these mark the pencil of the poet, which delineates nature with the precision of intimacy, yet with the delicate colouring of beauty and of taste. Burns possesses the spirit as well as the fancy of a poet; that honest pride and independence of soul, which are sometimes the muses' only dower, break forth on every occasion in his works." The criticism struck the true note of his peculiar genius, and, with something like prescience, claimed the honours of "National Poet," which have since been so strongly conceded."

This was regarded by some as not a little rash, on the part of Mackenzie; the rustic harp of Scotland had not been for centuries swept by a hand so forcible and free; the language was that of humble life, the scenes were the clay-cottage, the dusty barn, and the stubble-field, and the characters the clouterly children of the penfold and the plough. There was nothing in the new prodigy which could be called classic, little which those who looked through the vista of a college reckoned poetical; and his verses were deemed rather the effusions of a random rhymer than a true poet. Speaking from his heart, Mackenzie spoke right; and, in claiming for Burns the honours due to the elect in song, he did a good deed for genius. The Poet now stood at the head of northern song, and with historians, and philosophers, and critics applauding, he looked upon himself as "owned" by the best judges of his country.

The well-timed kindness of Mackenzie was never forgotten by Burns; from this time he prized the "Man of Feeling" as a book next in worth to the Bible; he never mentioned the author save in terms of affectionate admiration, and ranked him among his benefactors:—

"Mackenzie, Stewart, sic a brace,
As Rome ne'er saw."

He felt his high, and, to his fancy, dangerous elevation:—"You are afraid," he thus writes, January 15, 1787, to Mrs. Dunlop, "I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Alas! madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserve some notice; but in a most enlightened age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you, I tremble for the consequences. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and, however a friend, or the world, may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you once for all to disburthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But

"When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,"

you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward, with rueful resolve, to the hastening time, when the blow of calumny should dash it to the ground with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph."

The Poet speaks, about the same time, in a similar strain to the Rev. Mr. Laurie, who, it seems had warned him to beware of vanity, and of prosperity's spiced cup. A tone of despondency, too, is visible in his letters to Dr. Moore:—"Not many months ago," he observes, "I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast anything higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment; but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this, of late, I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see, with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities."

Burns indicates the station to which he must soon descend, still more plainly to another correspondent. The Earl of Buchan had advised him to visit the battle-fields of Caledonia, and, firing his fancy with deeds wrought by heroes, pour their deathless names in song. When the prophet retired to meditate in the desert, he was miraculously fed by ravens; but the peer forgot to say how the poet was to be fed when musing on the fields of Stirling, Falkirk, and Bannockburn. That Heaven would send food while he produced song seems not to have entered into his mind: for he says—"My Lord—in the midst of these enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry, moral-looking, phantom strides across my imagination, and pronounces these emphatic words:—'I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. Friend, I do not come to open the ill-closed wounds of your follies and misfortunes, merely to give you pain. I have given

you line upon line, and precept upon precept; and while I was chalking out to you the straight way to wealth and character, with audacious effrontery you have zig-zagged across the path, contemning me to my face. You know the consequences. Now that your dear-loved Scotia puts it in your power to return to the situation of your forefathers, will you follow these will-o'-the wisp meteors of fancy and whim, till they bring you once more to the brink of ruin? I grant that the utmost ground you can occupy is but half a step from the veriest poverty—still it is half a step from it. You know how you feel at the iron-gripe of ruthless oppression—you know how you bear the galling sneer of contumelious greatness. I hold you out the conveniences, the comforts of life, independence, and character, on the one hand; I tender you servility, dependence, and wretchedness, on the other. I will not insult your understanding by bidding you make a choice.'"

He intimated his intention of returning to the plough still more publicly, when, in the new edition of his works, April, 1787, he thus addressed the noblemen and gentlemen of Scotland:—"The poetic genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough—and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my natal soil, in my native tongue. I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired.—She whispered me to come to this ancient metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under your honoured protection. I do not approach you, my lords and gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed, by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favours. I was bred to the plough, and am independent." This bold language sounded strangely in noble ears. It was set down by some as approaching to arrogance—was regarded by others as the cant of independence; or considered by a few as rude and vulgar, and remembered, when the Poet looked for some better acknowledgment of his genius than a six-shilling subscription, or an invitation to dine. Silence, perhaps, would have been best; but if it were necessary to speak, I cannot see that he could have spoken better.

The Poet spent the winter and spring of 1787, in Edinburgh, much after his own heart; he loved company, and was not unwilling to shew that nature sometimes bestowed gifts, against which rank and education could scarcely make good their station. This was, perhaps, the unwisest course he could have pursued: a man with ten thousand a year will always be considered, by the world around, superior to a man whose wealth lies in his genius; the dullest can estimate what landed property is worth, but who can say what is the annual value of an estate which lies in the imagination? In fame there was no rivalry; and in station, what hope had a poet with the earth of his last turned furrow still red on his shoon, to rival the Montgomerys, the Hamiltons, and the Gordons, with counties for estates, and the traditional éclat of a thousand years accompanying them? In the sight of the great and the far-descended, he was still a farmer, for whom the Grass-market was the proper scene of action, and the husbandmen of the land the proper companions; his company was sought, not from a sense that genius had raised him to an equality with lords and earls, but from a wish to see how this wild man of the west would behave himself, in the presence of ladies, plumed and jewelled, and lords, clothed in all the terrors of their wealth and titles.

The beautiful Duchess of Gordon was, in those days, at the head of fashion in Edinburgh; a wit herself, with some taste for music and poetry; she sought the acquaintance of Burns, and invited him to her parties. Lord Monboddo, equally accomplished and whimsical, gave parties, after what he called the classic fashion; he desired to revive the splendid suppers of the ancients, and placed on his tables the choicest wines, in decanters of a Grecian pattern, adorned with wreaths of flowers: painting lent its attraction as well as music, while odours of all kinds were diffused from visible or invisible sources. Into scenes of this kind, and into company coldly polite and sensitively ceremonious, the brawny Bard of Doon, equally rash of speech and unceremonious in conduct, precipitated himself; but rich wines and lovely women, like the touch of the goddess which rendered Ulysses acceptable in the sight of a princess, brightened up the looks of the Poet, and inspired his tongue with that conquering eloquence which pleased fastidious ladies. In fine company, where it was imagined he would have failed, he triumphed. The fame of all these doings flew into Ayrshire.—"There is a great rumour here," said one of his friends, "concerning your intimacy with the Duchess of Gordon; I am really told that

"Cards to invite fly by thousands each night;"

and if you had one, I suppose there would be also 'bribes for your old secretary.' It seems that you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, a good maxim to thrive by; you seemed to despise it while in this country, but probably some philosopher in Edinburgh has taught you better sense."

Of his own feelings on these occasions the Poet has said but little: Lord Monboddo's table had other attractions than wine called Falernian, and dishes like those praised in

Latin verse. The beauty of his daughter is celebrated by Burns both in prose and poetry—

"Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own his work indeed divine!"

"I enclose you," he says to his friend Chalmers, "two poems which I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck. One blank in the Address to Edinburgh, 'fair B—' is the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter of Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been any thing nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the great Creator has formed since Milton's Eve, on the first day of her existence."

Those who were afraid that amid feasting and flattery—the smiles of ladies and the applauding nods of their lords—Burns would forget himself, and allow the mercury of vanity to rise too high within him, indulged in idle fears. When he dined or supped with the magnates of the land, he never wanted a monitor to warn him of the humility of his condition. When the company arose in the gilded and illuminated rooms, some of the fair guests—perhaps

"Her grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,"

took the hesitating arm of the Bard; went smiling to her coach, waved a graceful good-night with her jewelled hand, and, departing to her mansion, left him in the middle of the street to grope his way through the dingy alleys of the "gude town" to his obscure lodging, with his share of a deal table, a sanded floor, and a chaff bed, at eighteen pence a week. That his eyes were partly open to this, we know; but he did not perceive that these invitations arose from a wish to relieve the *ennui* of a supper-table, where the guests were all too well-bred to utter any thing strikingly original or boldly witty. Had Burns beheld the matter in this light, he would have sprung up like Wat Tinlinn, when touched with the elfin bodkin; and, overturning silver dishes, garlanded decanters, and shoving opposing ladies and staring lords aside, made his way to the plough-tail, and recommenced turning the furrows upon his cold and ungenial farm of Mossgiel.—"I have formed many intimacies and friendships here," he observes, in a letter to Dr. Moore; "but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature." In these words he expressed his fears: they were prophetic.

While his volume was passing through the press, he added "The Brigs of Ayr," the "Address to Edinburgh," and one or two songs and small pieces. The first poem, "The Brigs of Ayr," seems to have been written for the two-fold purpose of giving a picture of old times and new, and honouring in rhyme those who befriended him on the banks of Doon; and, like Ballantyne, to whom it is inscribed, had

"Handed the rustic stranger up to fame."

There were two poems which some of his friends begged him to exclude from his new volume. On the score of delicacy, they requested the omission of "The Louse;" and on that of loyalty and propriety, "The Dream." He defended the former, because of the moral with which the poem concludes, and maintained the propriety of the latter with such wit and indiscretion that cautious divines and cool professors shrugged their shoulders, and talked of the folly of the sons of song. Mrs. Dunlop seems to have taken the matter much to heart. —"Your criticisms, madam," says the Poet, nettled a little by her remonstrance, "I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel; I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, and critics, as all those respective gentry do by my bardship. I know what I may expect from the world by-and-bye—illiberal abuse, and, perhaps, contemptuous neglect."

In this sarcastic Dream, there was much to amuse and more to incense a king, who endured advice as little as he did contradiction. The life of George the Third was pure and blameless; but the young princes of his house had already commenced their gay and extravagant courses. The song of the Bard is prophetic of the two elder ones:—

"For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak' Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie.

"For you, Right Rev'rend Osnaburg,
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug,
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys o' Peter,
Then swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre."

The "Address to Edinburgh" contains some noble verses. I have heard the description of the castle praised by one, whose genius all but exempted him from error:—

"There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar,
Like some bold vet'ran, grey in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar:
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing War,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock."

When Burns told Mrs. Dunlop that he was determined to flatter no created being, she might have smiled; for in his "Earnest Cry and Prayer," he scattered praise as profusely as ever he scattered corn over his new-turned furrows. He, who could see Demosthenes and Cicero in half-a-dozen northern members of Parliament, was inclined to flatter: Dempster, Cunningham, the Campbells,—

"And ane, a chap that's damn'd auld-farran,
Dundas his name,"

were respectable debaters, but not eloquent. "Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie," came nearer to the comparison, and almost reconciles us to the lavish waste of honours on the others.

Burns' taste, which in all things resembled his genius, was almost always correct: he depended on its accuracy, and, as he used no words at random, was unwilling to alter aught. In the "Cotter's Saturday Night" he called Wallace the "unhappy," in allusion to his fate; he hesitated now to change the word to "undaunted," in compliance with the criticism of Mrs. Dunlop.—"Your friendly advice"—he says to that lady, "I will not give it the cold name of criticism, I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed. I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here: but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honour of giving me his strictures; his hints, with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly."

During the spring, he sat to Alexander Nasmyth for his portrait; it was engraved by Beugo, whose boast it was that he had added to the merit of the likeness by inducing Burns to give him a sitting or two while he touched up the plate. He also allowed his profile to be taken in small: the brow is low, the hair hangs over it, and there is a short queue behind. The portrait by Nasmyth is the best, though wanting a little in massive vigour and the look of inspiration. He sat to whoever desired him, nor seemed to be aware that genius went to such works as well as to the manufacture of rhyme. He took pleasure in presenting proof impressions of this portrait to his friends: sometimes the gift was accompanied by verse, and it has been remarked that he imagined he looked very well on paper, and expected some notice to be taken of his face as well as of his poetry.

Of his verse, indeed, the notice was not always taken that he desired. On the death of Dundas of Arniston, Lord President of the Court of Session, he wrote a "Lamentation," forty lines in length. There are vigorous passages; the Poet affects an excess of grief; he complains to the hills, the plains, and the tempests, of the too early removal of one who redressed wrongs, restrained violence, defeated fraud, and protected innocence. He copied the poem into a volume now before me, and presented it to Dr. Geddes, with the following note, describing the success of his "Lamentation."—"The foregoing poem has some tolerable lines in it, but the incurable wound of my pride will not suffer me to correct or even to peruse it. I sent a copy of it, with my best prose letter, to the son of the great man, the theme of the piece, by the hands, too, of one of the noblest men in God's world, Alex. Wood, surgeon; when, behold! his solicitorship took no more notice of my poem or me than I had been a strolling fiddler, who had made free with his lady's name, over the head of a silly new reel! Did he think I looked for any dirty gratuity?"

Some of the anecdotes related of the Poet and his proof-sheets are amusing enough. When he had made up his mind to retain a line in the words of its original inspiration—such as "When I look back on prospects drear,"—he stated his reasons briefly for refusing to make any change, and then sat, like his own heroine, "deaf as Ailsa Craig" to all persuasion or remonstrance. Nor did he lose his serenity of mind, though the way in which he unconsciously, perhaps, crumpled up the sheet in his hand, till he almost made it illegible, shewed what was passing within him. It was on one of these occasions that a clergyman, stung with the irreverent way that Burns had handled the cloth, in some of his earlier pieces, hazarded some stern remarks on the "Holy Fair;" not, he said, but that the poem was a clever picture, he only wished to shew that it was not constructed according to the true rules of composition. The reverend censor did not acquit himself well in his perilous undertaking: the eye of the Poet began to lighten, and his lips to give a sort of twitching announcement that something sarcastic was coming. All present looked towards him; he spoke as they expected, saying, "No, by heaven! I'll not touch him—

'Dulness is sacred in a sound divine.'"

—"I'll find you as apt a quotation as that," said the aggressor, "and from a poet whom I love more—

'Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle.'"

Burns laughed, held out his hand, saying, "Then we are friends again."

He did not always come off so happily: on another occasion, Cromek tells us that, at a breakfast, where a number of the literati were present, a critic, one of those fond of seeming very acute and wise, undertook to prove that Gray's Elegy in a country Church-yard, a poem of which Burns was enthusiastically fond, violated the essential rules of verse, and transgressed against true science, to which he held true poetry to be amenable. He failed, however, in explaining the nature of his scientific gauge, and he also failed in quoting the lines correctly, which he proposed to censure; upon which Burns exclaimed with great vehemence, "Sir, I now perceive a man may be an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and, after all, be a d——d blockhead."

One of those critical scenes is well described by Professor Walker, who happened to be present; it occurred at the table of Dr. Blair, who was fond of hearing the Poet read his own verses.—"The aversion of Burns," he observes, "to adopt alterations which were proposed to him, after having fully satisfied his own taste, is apparent from his letters. In one passage, he says that he never accepted any of the corrections of the Edinburgh Literati, except in the instance of a single word. If his admirers should be desirous to know this 'single word,' I am able to gratify them, as I happened to be present when the criticism was made. It was at the table of a gentleman of literary celebrity (Dr. Blair), who observed, that in two lines of the 'Holy Fair,' beginning—

'For Moodie speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings of salvation.'

The last word, from his description of the preacher, ought to be *damnation*. This change, both embittering the satire, and introducing a word to which Burns had no dislike, met with his instant enthusiastic approbation. 'Excellent!' he exclaimed with great warmth, 'the alteration shall be made, and I hope you will allow me to say, in a note, from whose suggestion it proceeds;' a request which the critic with great good humour, but with equal decision, refused." The Poet had not yet discovered what was due to clerical decorum. I must copy another of Professor Walker's pictures of the Poet and the Edinburgh Literati:—

"The day after my introduction to Burns," says the Professor, "I supped in company with him at Dr. Blair's. The other guests were very few; and, as each had been invited chiefly to have an opportunity of meeting with the Poet, the Doctor endeavoured to draw him out, and make him the central figure of the groupe. Though he, therefore, furnished the greatest proportion of the conversation, he did no more than what he saw was evidently expected. Men of genius have often been taxed with a proneness to commit blunders in company, from that ignorance or negligence of the laws of conversation, which must be imputed to the absorption of their thoughts on a favourite subject, or to the want of that daily practice in attending to the petty modes of behaviour, which is incompatible with a studious life. From singularities of this sort, Burns was unusually free: yet, on the present occasion, he made a more awkward slip than any that are reported of the poets or mathematicians, most noted for absence. Being asked from which of the public places of worship he had received the greatest gratification, he named the high church, but gave the preference as a preacher to (the Rev. Robert Walker) the colleague (and most formidable rival) of our worthy entertainer—whose celebrity rested on his pulpit eloquence—in a tone so pointed and decisive as to throw the whole company into the most foolish embarrassment. The Doctor, indeed, with becoming self-command, endeavoured to relieve the rest by cordially seconding the encomium so injudiciously introduced; but this did not prevent the conversation from labouring under that compulsory effort which was unavoidable, while the thoughts of all were full of the only subject on which it was improper to speak. Of this blunder Burns must instantly have been aware, but he shewed the return of good sense by making no attempt to repair it. His secret mortification was indeed so great that he never mentioned the circumstance until many years after, when he told me that his silence had proceeded from the pain which he felt in recalling it to his memory."

It must be mentioned, to the honour of Blair, that this mortifying blunder had no influence over his well-regulated mind, and that he appears, from his correspondence, to have augmented rather than lessened his kindness for the Poet; the strong sense of propriety which is visible in all that Blair ever said or wrote preserved him from this: yet he probably thought of the Poet's preference when he first saw the fragment on America, beginning:—

"When Guilford good our pilot stood;"

and said, "Burns' politics always smell of the smithy." The Bard disapproved of the war waged with America; the world at large has shared in his feelings, and the sarcasm of the Doctor falls harmless on this little hasty, though not very happy production. It was likely to Blair that Burns glanced when, in reply to the question if the critical literati of Edinburgh had aided him with their opinions, —"The best of these gentlemen," said he, "are like the wife's daughter in the west—they spin the thread of their criticism so fine, that it is fit for neither warp nor waft." He was never at a loss for illustrations drawn from domestic life or rural affairs.

[No one has equalled Lockhart's account of Burns among the literati and lawyers of Edinburgh:—"It needs no effort of imagination to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail, at a single stride, manifested, in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation, a most thorough conviction that, in the society of the most eminent men of his nation, he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble—nay, to tremble visibly—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles, for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and—last, and probably worst of all,—who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies, which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood, still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had, ere long, no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.

"The lawyers of Edinburgh, in whose wider circle Burns figured at his outset, with at least as much success as among the professional literati, were a very different race of men from these, they would neither, I take it, have pardoned rudeness, nor been alarmed by wit. But being, in those days, with scarcely an exception, members of the landed aristocracy of the country, and forming by far the most influential body (as, indeed, they still do) in the society of Scotland, they were, perhaps, as proud a set of men as ever enjoyed the tranquil pleasures of unquestioned superiority. What their haughtiness, as a body, was, may be guessed, when we know that inferior birth was reckoned a fair and legitimate ground for excluding any man from the bar. In one remarkable instance, about this very time, a man of very extraordinary talents and accomplishments was chiefly opposed in a long and painful struggle for admission, and in reality, for no reasons but those I have been alluding to, by gentlemen, who, in the sequel, stood at the very head of the Whig party in Edinburgh; and the same aristocratical prejudice has, within the memory of the present generation, kept more persons of eminent qualifications in the back-ground, for a season, than any English reader would easily believe. To this body belonged nineteen out of twenty of those "patricians," whose stateliness Burns so long remembered, and so bitterly resented. It might, perhaps, have been well for him had stateliness been the worst fault of their manners. Wine-bibbing appears to be in most regions a favourite indulgence with those whose brains and lungs are subjected to the severe exercises of legal study and forensic practice. To this day, more traces of these old habits linger about the inns of courts than in any other sections of London. In Dublin and Edinburgh, the barristers are even now eminently convivial bodies of men; but among the Scotch lawyers of the time of Burns, the principle of jollity was indeed in its "high and palmy state." He partook largely in those tavern scenes of audacious hilarity, which then soothed, as a matter of course, the arid labours of the northern *noblesse de la robe* (so they are well called in Red Gauntlet), and of which we are favoured with a specimen in the "High Jinks" chapter of Guy Mannering.

The tavern-life is now-a-days nearly extinct every where; but it was then in full vigour in Edinburgh, and there can be no doubt that Burns rapidly familiarized himself with it during his residence. He had, after all, tasted but rarely of such excesses while in Ayr-shire.*]

* [The fact is, those who accuse Burns of drunkenness know nothing about the history of drunkenness in Scotland at all. Let them look at the character of the Baron of Bradwardine in one age, and of High Jinks in another, by Sir Walter Scott, and they will find the epitome of drinking in those ages drawn to the very life. About the beginning of the last century, and for some time previous, drinking, among the nobility and first-rate gentry of Scotland, was carried to a very great height. The late Provost Creech of Edinburgh told many good stories illustrative of that age, and among others was the following:—There was one Angusshire laird went to visit a neighbour, whose christian name was George. The visitor was the laird of Balnamoon, commonly called Bonnymoon; he would drink nothing but claret: so his friend, George, made up a great number of bottles of half-brandy and half-claret, knowing that the laird would stick to his number. He did so, and commended the wine greatly; but sat on with his friend three days and two nights without perceiving it, he being all that time in the highest glee. At the end of the third day Bonnymoon failed, grew pale, and sunk back on his chair. "Come, laird, fill your glass; this will never do." "O,—George,—I can—do—no more—for you." "Then you had better go to bed." "O, no!—I never sleep—from—home. Never—stay from home a—night:—never!" So off went the laird with his servant behind him—both on capital horses. The night was dark and stormy, and, in riding over a waste, off went the laird's hat. John galloped after it, and seized it, leaning on a furze bush. "John, this is not my hat at all; go and look for the right one." "There is very little wale o' cockit hats here the night, your honour." "I say, John, this is not my hat. It would hold two heads like mine. I'll be d——d but it has taken the wig away with it." After long groping, John got the wig on another furze bush, and handed it to his

Towards the close of April the subscription volume

"On wings of wind came flying all abroad,"

and was widely and warmly welcomed. All that coterie influence and individual exertion—all that the noblest or the humblest could do, was done to aid in giving it a kind reception; Creech, too, had announced it through the booksellers of the land, and it was soon diffused over the country, over the colonies, and wherever the language was spoken. The literary men of the south seemed even to fly a flight beyond those of the north. Some hesitated not to call him the northern Shakspeare; criticism at that period had not usurped the throne, and assumed the functions of genius; reviews were few in number, and moderate in influence, and followed opinion rather than led it. Had he lived in a later day, with what a triumphant air of superiority would the two leading critical journals have crushed him! They would have agreed in this, though in nothing else, to trample down a spirit which wrote not as they wrote, and felt not as they felt; they would have assumed the air of high philosophy and searching science, and buried him, as he did the Daisy, under the weight of a deep-drawn critical furrow. The Whig of the north would have pounced on his poetical jacobitism; the Tory of the south upon his love of freedom; and both would have tossed him to the meaner hounds of the kennel of criticism, after they had dissected the soul and heart out of him. Much of this these journals tried to do at a later period, when the Poet was low in the dust, and his fame as high as Heaven, and beyond their rancour or their spite.

While Burns lodged with his Mauchline friend, Richmond, he kept good hours and sober company. In the course of the spring he became acquainted with William Nicol, one of the masters of the High-school, who lived in the Buccleugh-road, and found more suitable accommodation under his roof. This has been considered as a symptom that the keeping of good hours was growing irksome. The poverty of the Poet made him live frugally—nay, meanly, when he arrived in Edinburgh; but when money came pouring in, and gentlemen of note called on him, it did not become him to remain in an apartment of which he had but a share. I see little harm in this, or proof of increasing irregularity. Nicol, it is true, was of a quick, fierce temper—loose and wavering in his religious opinions—fond of social company, and now and then indulged in excesses, though his situation required sobriety. Lockhart, who charges the imputed irregularities of Burns on the example of Nicol, supports his conclusion by the testimony of Heron. But Heron is a doubtful evidence; he was himself not only inclined to gross sensual indulgence, but has been regarded as one not at all solicitous about the truth.—"The enticements of pleasure," says Heron, "too often unman our virtuous resolutions, even while we wear the air of rejecting them with a stern brow. We resist, and resist, and resist; but at last suddenly turn and embrace the enchantress. The bucks of Edinburgh accomplished, in regard to Burns, that in which the boors of Ayr-shire had failed. After residing some months in Edinburgh, he began to estrange himself, not altogether, but in some measure, from graver friends. Too many of his hours were now spent at the tables of persons who delighted to urge conviviality to drunkenness." Heron knew not what resolutions Burns formed, nor how much he resisted: and to push conviviality to intoxication was common in those days at the tables of the gentlemen of the north. The entertainer set down the quantity to be drunk, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and the guests had either to swallow all his wine, or fill the landlord tipsy, steal the key, and escape.

Though Burns had expressed doubts to Lord Buchan on the prudence of a pennyless poet visiting the battle-fields, and fine natural scenery of Scotland, and intimated to many of his friends his resolution to return to the plough, he longed to pull broom on the Cowden-knowes, look at the Birks on the Braes of Yarrow, and see whether Flora smiled as sweetly on the Tweed as Crawford had represented. On the third of May he wrote to Dr. Blair—"I leave Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship which you have shown me." The Doctor answered his farewell at once, and his words weigh those of Heron to the dust.—"Your situation was indeed very singular; and, being brought out all at once from the shades of deepest privacy to so great a share of public notice and observation, you had to stand a severe trial. I am happy you have stood it so well; and, as far as I have known or heard—though in the midst of many temptations—without reproach to your character and behaviour. You are now, I presume, to retire to a more private walk of life, and I trust you will conduct yourself there with industry, prudence, and honour. You have laid the foundation for just public esteem.

master. "John, this is not my wig; just look at it: this is not my wig at all:"—(he had put it on with the wrong side foremost.) "Ah! guid faith, your honour, if there's little wale o' hats, there's nae wale o' wigs here, this night." They rode on, and on coming to the North Esk, the laird's horse dashed down his head to drink, and off went the laird, head foremost, into the river, with a prodigious plunge. He soon, however, set up his head. "John, what was that?" "I dinna ken. I thought it had been your honour." "John, I dinna understand this." "Get up, your honour, you'll maybe understand it by and by." HOGG.]

In the midst of those employments which your situation will render proper, you will not, I hope, neglect to promote that esteem by cultivating your genius, and attending to such productions of it, as may raise your character still higher. At the same time, be not in too great haste to come forward. Take time and leisure to improve and mature your talents; for, on any second production you give the world, your fate, as a poet, will very much depend." Burns, it is said, received this letter when about to mount his horse on his Border excursion; he read as far as I have transcribed, then crumpled up the communication, and, thrusting it into his pocket, exclaimed, "Kindly said, Doctor; but a man's first-born book is often like his first-born babe—healthier and stronger than those which follow." In this mood he quitted Edinburgh, after a residence of five months and some odd days.

Burns was accompanied in this tour by Robert Ainslie, a young gentleman of talents and education, whose friendship his genius had procured, and who is still living to enjoy the esteem and some of the applause of the world. The Poet directed his course by Lammermoor—whose hills he pronounced dreary in general, but at times picturesque—through Peebles, where he chanted a stave of the old song of "The Wife of Peebles;" passed Coldstream, where he thought of Monk and his "reformadoe saints," and from Lanton-Edge gazed on the Merse, which he pronounced "glorious."

[Of this tour, Burns kept a journal; it is now before me: the entries are brief, but generally to the point.—"May 6th, 1787. Reach Berrywell; old Mr. Ainslie an uncommon character; his hobbies—agriculture, natural philosophy, and politics. In the first, he is unexceptionably the clearest-headed, best-informed man I ever met with; in the other two, very intelligent: as a man of business he has uncommon merit, and by fairly deserving it, has made a very decent independence. Mrs. Ainslie, an excellent, sensible, cheerful, amiable woman. Miss Ainslie, her person a little *embonpoint*, but handsome, her face, particularly her eyes, full of sweetness and good humour. She unites three qualities rarely to be found together; keen penetration, sly witty observation and remark, and the gentlest, most unaffected, female modesty.—Douglas, a clever, fine, promising young fellow.—The family-meeting with their brother, my *compagnon de voyage*, very charming; particularly the sister. The whole family remarkably attached to their menials—Mrs. A. full of stories of the sagacity and sense of the little girl in the kitchen.—Mr. A. high in the praises of an African, his house servant—all his people old in his service—Douglas's old nurse came to Berrywell yesterday to remind them of its being his birth-day." Here he met with the author of "The Maid that tends the Goats," of whom he says,—"Mr. Dudgeon—a poet at times, a worthy, remarkable character, natural penetration, a great deal of information, some genius, and extreme modesty." In the pulpit of Dunse church, he found a character of another stamp.—"Dr. Bowmaker, a man of strong lungs, and pretty judicious remark; but ill skilled in propriety, and altogether unconscious of his want of it." He preached a sermon against "obstinate sinners." "I am found out," whispered the Poet to a friend, "wherever I go."*

On reaching the Tweed, Ainslie requested Burns to pass the stream, that he might say he had been in England. The following brief entry is all the memoranda he makes of this event:—"Coldstream—went over to England—glorious river Tweed, clear and majestic." His companion has enabled me to complete the picture—"The Poet accompanied me on a horseback excursion from Edinburgh to Peebles, down the Tweed, all the way to Coldstream, and thence to Berrywell, near Dunse, the residence of my father. The weather was charming; both parties then youthful and in good spirits; and the Poet delighted with the fine scenery, and the many poetical associations connected with it. When we arrived at Coldstream, where the dividing line between Scotland and England is the Tweed, I suggested our going across to the other side of the river by the Coldstream bridge, that Burns might have it to say he '*had been in England.*' We did so, and were pacing slowly along on English ground, enjoying our walk, when I was astonished to see the Poet throw away his hat, and, thus uncovered, look towards Scotland, kneeling down with uplifted hands, and, apparently, in a state of great enthusiasm. I kept silence, uncertain what was next to be done, when Burns, with extreme emotion, and an expression of countenance which I will never forget, prayed for and blessed Scotland most solemnly, by pronouncing aloud, in accents of the deepest devotion, the two concluding verses of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night:'—

'O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!

* ["During the discourse Burns produced a neat impromptu, conveying an elegant compliment to Miss Ainslie. Dr. B. had selected a text of Scripture that contained a heavy denunciation against obstinate sinners. In the course of the sermon Burns observed the young lady turning over the leaves of her Bible, with much earnestness, in search of the text. He took out a slip of paper, and with a pencil wrote the following lines on it, which he immediately presented to her:

'Fair maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor idle texts pursue:
'Twas *guilty sinners* that he meant,
Not *angels* such as you!'"

CROMEK.]

And, Oh! may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

'O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part;
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!' "

At Lenel-House he drank tea with Brydone the traveller; of this he makes a brief record. —"Mr. Brydone is a man of an excellent heart, kind, joyous, and benevolent; but a good deal of the French indiscriminate complaisance—from his situation, past and present, an admirer of everything that bears a splendid title, or that possesses a large estate; Mrs. Brydone, a most elegant woman in her person and manners; the tones of her voice remarkably sweet—my reception extremely flattering." He slept at Coldstream, and then proceeded to Kelso, of which he pronounced the situation charming.—"Fine bridge over the Tweed—enchanting views and prospects on both sides of the river, particularly the Scottish side; introduced to Mr. Scott of the Royal Bank—an excellent, modest fellow."

He walked on to the ruins of Roxburgh castle; and wrote in his journal:—"A holly-bush growing where James II. of Scotland was accidently killed by the bursting of a cannon. A small old religious ruin, and a fine old garden, planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by an English Hottentot, a *maitre d'hotel* of the duke's, a Mr. Cole. Climate and soil of Berwick-shire, and even Roxburgh-shire, superior to Ayr-shire—bad roads. Turnip and sheep husbandry, their great improvements. Mr. M'Dowal, of Caverton-Mill, a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, with whom I dined to day, sold his sheep, ewe and lamb together, at two guineas a piece. They wash their sheep before shearing; seven or eight pounds of washen wool in a fleece. Low markets, consequently low rents; fine lands not above sixteen shillings a Scotch acre: magnificence of farmers and farm-houses." On his way up the Tiviot and the Jed, he visited an old gentleman, whose boast it was that he possessed an arm-chair which had belonged to Thomson the poet. Burns reverently examined the relique, could scarcely be prevailed to sit in it, and seemed to feel inspiration from its touch.

In Jedburgh, the Poet found much to interest him.—"Breakfast with Mr. ——, a squabble between the old lady, a crazed, talkative slattern, and her sister, an old maid, respecting a relief minister—Miss gives Madam the lie; and Madam, by way of revenge, upbraids her for having laid snares to entangle the said minister in the net of matrimony. Go about two miles out of the town to a roup (sale) of parks; meet a polite soldier-like gentleman, a Captain Rutherford, who had been many years in the wilds of America, a prisoner among the Indians. Charming, romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens and orchards intermingled among the houses. Fine old ruins; a once magnificent cathedral, and strong castle. All the towns here have the appearance of old rude grandeur, but the people extremely idle. Jed, a fine romantic little river." Burns dined with Captain Rutherford—the Captain a polite fellow, fond of money in his farming way; shewed a particular respect to my bardship—his lady a proper matrimonial second part of him—Miss Rutherford a beautiful girl, but too much of a woman to expose so much of a fine swelling bosom—her face very fine. Return to Jedburgh—walk up Jed with some ladies to be shewn Love-lane and Blackburn, two fairy scenes. Introduced to Mr. Potts, writer, a very clever fellow; and to Mr. Somerville, the minister of the place; a man, and a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning."*]

Here he met with something not unlike a love adventure: in one of his walks he was accompanied by several ladies:—"Miss Hope, a pretty girl, fond of laughing and fun; Miss Lindsay, a good-humoured, amiable girl; rather short, *et embonpoint*, but handsome, and extremely graceful; beautiful hazel eyes full of spirit, and sparkling with delicious moisture; an engaging face, *un tout ensemble* that speaks her of the first order of female minds; her sister, a bonny strappan, rosy, sonsie lass." The Poet, would, perhaps, have contented himself with silently admiring this dangerous companion; but two venerable spinsters persecuted him so with their conversation that he took refuge with Miss Lindsay, who was touched, as he imagined, with his attentions.—"My heart," he says in his record, "is thawed into melting pleasure after being so long frozen up in the Greenland bay of indifference, amid the noise and nonsense of Edinburgh. Miss seems very well pleased with my Bardship's distinguishing her, and after some slight qualms, which I could easily mark, she sets the titter round at defiance, and kindly allows me to keep my hold; and when parted by the ceremony of my introduction to Mr. Somerville, she met me half, to resume my situation. *Nota Bene.*—The Poet within a point and a half of being damnably in love; I am afraid my bosom is still nearly as

* [After seeing this remark in print, Dr. Somerville never punned more. He was the author of two substantial works on the history of England between the Restoration and the accession of the Brunswick dynasty. He died, May 16, 1830, at the age of ninety years, sixty-four of which had been passed in the clerical profession. A son of Dr. Somerville is husband to a lady distinguished in the scientific world.]

much tinder as ever; I find Miss Lindsay would soon play the devil with me. The old, cross-grained, whiggish, ugly, slanderous Miss ——, with all the poisonous spleen of a disappointed, ancient maid, stops me, very unseasonably, to ease her bursting breast, by falling abusively foul on the Miss Lindsays, particularly on my Dulcinea;—I hardly refrain from cursing her to her face for daring to mouth her calumnious slander on one of the finest pieces of the workmanship of Almighty Excellence! Sup at Mr. ——'s; vexed that the Miss Lindsays are not of the supper party, as they only are wanting. Mrs. —— and Miss —— still improve infernally on my hands. Set out next morning for Wauchope, the seat of my correspondent, Mrs. Scott;—breakfast by the way with Dr. Elliott, an agreeable, good-hearted, climate-beaten, old veteran, in the medical line; now retired to a romantic, but rather moorish place, on the banks of the Roole—he accompanies us almost to Wauchope—we traverse the country to the top of Bochester, the scene of an old encampment, and Woolee Hill. Wauchope—Mr. Scott exactly the figure and face commonly given to Sancho Pança—very shrewd in his farming matters, and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing. Mrs. Scott all the sense, taste, intrepidity of face, and bold, critical decision, which usually distinguish female authors.—Sup with Mr. Potts—agreeable party. —Breakfast next morning with Mr. Somerville —the *bruit* of Miss Lindsay and my bardship, by means of the invention and malice of Miss ——. Mr. Somerville sends to Dr. Lindsay, begging him and family to breakfast if convenient, but at all events to send Miss Lindsay; accordingly Miss Lindsay only comes—I met with some little flattering attentions from her. Mrs. Somerville an excellent, motherly, agreeable woman, and a fine family.—Mr. Ainslie and Mrs. S——, junrs., with Mr. ——, Miss Lindsay, and myself, go to see *Esther*, a very remarkable woman for reciting poetry of all kinds, and sometimes making Scotch doggerel herself—she can repeat by heart almost every thing she has ever read, particularly Pope's Homer from end to end—has studied Euclid by herself, and, in short, is a woman of very extraordinary abilities.—On conversing with her I find her fully equal to the character given of her.*—She is very much flattered that I send for her, and that she sees a poet who has *put out a book*, as she says.—She is, among other things, a great florist—and is rather past the meridian of once celebrated beauty. I walk in *Esther's* garden with Miss Lindsay, and after some little chit-chat of the tender kind, I presented her with a proof print of my Nob, which she accepted with something more tender than gratitude. She told me many little stories which Miss —— had retailed concerning her and me, with prolonging pleasure—God bless her!" He seems ready to burst into song as he proceeds with his journal. "Took farewell of Jedburgh with some melancholy, disagreeable sensations. Jed, pure be thy crystal streams, and hallowed thy sylvan banks! Sweet Isabella Lindsay, may peace dwell in thy bosom uninterrupted, except by the tumultuous throbbings of rapturous love! That love-kindling eye must beam on another, not on me: that graceful form must bless another's arms, not mine! Was waited on by the magistrates, and handsomely presented with the freedom of the town.

"Kelso; dine with the Farmer's Club; all gentlemen talking of high matters: each of them keeps a hunter, of from thirty to fifty pounds' value, and attends the fox-huntings in the county. Go out with Mr. Ker, one of the club, and a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, to sleep; Mr. Ker, a most gentlemanly, clever fellow; a widower, with some fine children; his mind and manner astonishingly like my dear old friend, Robert Muir, in Kilmarnock; he offers to accompany me on my English tour: dine with Sir Alexander Don; a pretty clever fellow, but far from being a match for his divine lady."

On the thirteenth of May, Burns visited Dryburgh Abbey, and, though the weather was wild, spent an hour among the ruins, since hallowed by the dust of Scott; he crossed the Leader, and went up the Tweed to Melrose, which he calls a "far-famed glorious ruin." Though desirous of musing on battle-fields, he seems to have left Ancram-moor unheeded; nor did he pause to look at the spot where

> "Gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
> Reek'd on dark Elliot's border spear."

He sat for some time, indeed, among the broom of the Cowden-knowes, and had a chat with the Souters of Selkirk, concerning the field of Flodden; but no one seems to have told him of Huntly-burn, where True Thomas flirted with the Fairy Queen; nor of Philiphaugh, where Montrose and his cavaliers were routed by Lesly: nor of Carterhaugh, made memorable in song by the fine ballad of Tamlane. He was not in a pastoral mood; for he says briefly,—"The whole country hereabout, both on Tweed and Ettrick, remarkably stony." In the inspiration necessary for verse, there is none of the spirit of prophecy; he passed over some broken ground and peat-haggs, where his mare, Jenny

* ["This extraordinary woman then moved in a very humble walk of life;—the wife of a common working gardener. She is still living—her time is principally occupied in her attentions to a little day school, which not being sufficient for her subsistence, she is obliged to solicit the charity of her benevolent neighbours.

'Ah, who would love the lyre!' "

CROMEK.]

Geddes, kept her feet with difficulty, unconscious that on that desolate spot the Towers of Abbotsford would, ere long, arise, and those immortal romances be written which have made his own the second name in Scottish literature.

The weather having settled, the Poet visited Inverleithing, a famous shaw, and in the vicinity of the palace of Traquaid, "where," says he, "I dined and drank some Galloway whey, and saw Elibanks and Elibraes on the other side of the Tweed." In the morning he continued his journey, and found other places made famous in tale and song.—"Dine at a country inn, kept by a miller in Earlston, the birth-place and residence of the celebrated Thomas the Rhymer, and saw the ruins of his castle." He now shaped his course to Dunse, where he dined with the Farmers'-Club—found it impossible to do them justice—met "the Rev. Mr. Smith, a famous punster, and Mr. Meikle, a celebrated mechanic, and inventor of the threshing-mills." The next day, "breakfast at Berrywell, and walk into Douse to see a famous knife made by a cutler there, and to be presented to an Italian prince.—A pleasant ride with my friend Mr. Robert Ainslie, and his sister, to Mr. Thomson's, a man who has newly commenced farmer, and has married a Miss Patty Grieve, formerly a flame of Mr. Robert Ainslie's.—Company—Miss Jacky Grieve, an amiable sister of Mrs. Thomson's, and Mr. Hood, an honest, worthy, facetious farmer, in the neighbourhood. Berwick he looked on as 'an idle town, rudely picturesque.' Meet Lord Errol in walking round the walls.—His Lordship's flattering notice of me.—Dine with Mr. Clunzie, merchant—nothing particular in company or conversation.—Come up a bold shore, and over a wild country to Eyemouth—sup and sleep at Mr. Grieve's. Wm. Grieve, the oldest brother, a joyous, warm-hearted, jolly, clever fellow—takes a hearty glass, and sings a good song.—Mr. Robert, his brother, and partner in trade, a good fellow, but says little. Take a sail after dinner.—Fishing of all kinds pays tythes at Eyemouth. The Miss Grieves very good girls. My Bardship's heart got a brush from Miss Betsey. Mr. William Grieve's attachment to the family-circle, so fond that when he is out, which by the bye is often the case, he cannot go to bed 'till he see if all his sisters are sleeping well.—Pass the famous Abbey of Coldingham, and Pease-bridge.—Call at Mr. Sheriff's, where Mr. A. and I dine.—Mr. S. talkative and conceited. I talk of love to Nancy the whole evening, while her brother escorts home some companions like himself." At Eyemouth, he loved the look of the sea and shore so much that he took a sail after dinner; here, in compliment to his genius, so runs the brotherly record, he was made a royal arch mason of St. Abb's lodge.*—"Sir James Hall, of Dunglass, having heard," he says, "of my being in the neighbourhood, comes to Mr. Sheriff's to breakfast; takes me to see his fine scenery on the stream of Dunglass. Dunglass, the most romantic, sweet place I ever saw. Sir James and his lady, a pleasant happy couple; he points out a walk, for which he has an uncommon respect, as it was made by an aunt of his to whom he owes much." Burns seems to have fallen into something of a cynical mood on leaving the author of the ingenious work on the "Origin of Gothic Architecture." "A Mr. Robinson, brewer, at Ednam, sets out with us to Dunbar."—A lady, of whose charms and conversation he was no admirer, resolved to accompany him by way of making a parade of him as a sweetheart; his description of her is severe and clever:—"She mounts an old cart-horse, as huge and lean as a house; a rusty old side-saddle without girth or stirrup, but fastened on with an old pillion-girth: herself as fine as hands could make her, in cream-coloured riding clothes, hat and feather, &c. I, ashamed of my situation, ride like the devil, and almost shake her to pieces on old Jolly—get rid of her by refusing to call at her uncle's with her."

On reaching Dunbar he notes in his journal—"Passed through the most glorious corn country I ever saw. Dine with Provost Fall, an eminent merchant, and respectable character, but indescribable, as he exhibits no marked traits. Mrs. Fall, a genius in painting; fully more clever in the fine arts and sciences than my friend, Lady Wauchope, without her consummate assurance of her own abilities. Call with Mr. Robinson (who, by the bye, I find to be a worthy, much respected man, very modest; warm, social heart, which with less good sense than his would be perhaps, with the children of prim precision and pride, rather inimical to that respect which is man's due from man) on Miss Clarke, a maiden,—in the Scotch phrase, '*Guid enough.*' She wanted to see what sort of *raree show* an author was; and to let him know that, though Dunbar was but a

* [The entry made on this occasion in the Lodge Books of St. Abb's is honourable to

"The brethren of the mystic level."

"*Eyemouth*, 19*th May*, 1787.

"At a general Encampment held this day, the following brethren were made Royal Arch Masons, viz. Robert Burns, from the Lodge of St. James's, Tarbolton, Ayr-shire, and Robert Ainslie, from the Lodge of St. Luke's, Edinburgh, by James Carmichael, Wm. Grieve, Daniel Dow, John Clay, Robert Grieve, &c. &c. Robert Ainslie paid one guinea admission dues; but, on account of R. Burns's remarkable poetical genius, the Encampment unanimously agreed to admit him gratis, and considered themselves honoured by having a man of such shining abilities for one of their companions."

Extracted from the Minute Book of the Lodge by
THOS. BOWHILL.]

little town, yet it was not destitute of people of parts. Breakfast next morning at Skateraw, at Mr. Lee's, a farmer of great note.—Mr. Lee, an excellent, hospitable, social fellow, rather oldish; warm-hearted and chatty—a most judicious, sensible farmer. Mr. Lee detains me till next morning.—Company at dinner.—My Rev. acquaintance Dr. Bowmaker, a reverend, rattling old fellow.—Two sea lieutenants; a cousin of the landlord's." The sarcastic humour of the Poet continues: he meets a lady, "but no brent new; a clever woman, with tolerable pretensions to remark and wit, while time had blown the blushing bud of bashful modesty into the full-blossomed flower of easy confidence." "A fellow whose looks are of that kind which deceived me in a gentleman at Kelso, and has often deceived me; a goodly, handsome figure and face, which incline one to give them credit for parts which they have not." "Mr. Clarke, a much cleverer fellow, but whose looks, a little cloudy, and his appearance rather ungainly, with an every day observer, may prejudice the opinion against him. Dr. Brown, a medical young gentleman from Dunbar, a fellow whose face and manners are open and engaging.—Leave Skateraw for Dunse next day, along with collector ——, a lad of slender abilities, and bashfully diffident to an extreme." The cloud now begins to pass away. In good time comes an antidote; he reached Dunse, and "found Miss Ainslie, the amiable, the sensible, the good-humoured and sweet Miss Ainslie, all alone at Berrywell. Heavenly powers, who know the weakness of human hearts, support mine! What happiness must I see only to remind me that I cannot enjoy it! Lammer-muir Hills, from East Lothian to Dunse very wild.—Dine with the Farmer's Club at Kelso. Sir John Hume and Mr. Lumsden there, but nothing worth remembrance, when the following circumstance is considered—I walk into Dunse before dinner, and out to Berrywell in the evening with Miss Ainslie. How well-bred, how frank, how good she is! Charming Rachel! may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrows, or by the villany of this world's sons!"

Burns was now joined by Mr. Ker; they dined with Mr. Hood, and set off on a jaunt to England: sudden illness seized him by the way; the entry in his journal is characteristic.—"I am taken extremely ill, with strong feverish symptoms, and take a servant of Mr. Hood's to watch me all night. Embittering remorse scares my fancy at the gloomy forebodings of death. I am determined to live for the future in such a manner as not to be scared at the approach of Death: I am sure I could meet him with indifference but for The something beyond the grave." He recovered his health and spirits, and went to see the roup (auction) of an unfortunate farmer's stock. He surveyed the scene with a darkening brow and a troubled eye.—"Rigid economy, and decent industry," he said, "do you preserve me from being the principal *dramatis persona* in such a scene of horror! Meet my good old friend Mr. Ainslie, who calls on Mr. Hood in the evening, to take farewell of my Bardship. This day I feel myself warm with sentiments of gratitude to the great Preserver of men, who has kindly restored me to health and strength once more. A pleasant walk with my young friend, Douglas Ainslie, a sweet, modest, clever young fellow." He now recommenced his tour.

"Sunday, May 27.—Cross Tweed, and traverse the moors, through a wild country, till I reach Alnwick—Alnwick-Castle, a seat of the Duke of Northumberland, furnished in a most princely manner. A Mr. Wilkin, agent of His Grace, shews us the house and policies. Mr. Wilkin, a discreet, sensible, ingenious man. Monday—Come still through bye-ways to Warkworth, where we dine. Warkworth, situated very picturesque, with Coquet Island, a small rocky spot, the seat of an old monastery, facing it a little in the sea; and the small but romantic river Coquet running through it. Sleep at Morpeth, a pleasant-enough little town, and on next day to Newcastle." Meet with a very agreeable, sensible fellow, a Mr. Chattox, who shews us a great many civilities, and who dines and sups with us." The Poet seems to have found little in Newcastle to interest him: tradition says that at dinner he was startled at seeing the meat served before the soup. "This," said his facetious entertainer, "is in obedience to a Northumberland maxim, which enjoins us to eat the beef before we sup the broth, lest the hungry Scotch make an inroad and snatch it." Burns laughed heartily. On leaving Newcastle he rode over a fine country to Hexham, to breakfast—from Hexham to Wardrue, the celebrated Spa, where he slept. Thence he proceeded on to Longtown, which he reached on a hiring day.—"I am uncommonly happy," he says, "to see so many young folks enjoying life." Here he parted with his good friends, Messrs. Hood and Ker. He arrives at Carlisle, and meets his good friend, Mr. Mitchell, and walks with him round the town and its environs, and through his printing-works, &c.—"four or five hundred people employed, many of them women and children.—Dine with Mr. Mitchel, and leave Carlisle.—Come by the coast to Annan.—Overtaken on the way by a curious old fish of a shoemaker, and miner, from Cumberland mines."

[Here the Manuscript of his Border Tour abruptly terminates.]

He sat down and gave a brief account of his jaunt, to his friend Nicol, in very particular Scotch; saying, in conclusion, "I'll be in Dumfries the morn, gif the beast be to the fore, and

the branks bide hale. Gude be wi' you, Willie. Amen."

From Carlisle he went along the coast to Annan and Dumfries.—"I am quite charmed," he says, "with Dumfries folks. Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember: and his wife—Gude forgie me; I had almost broke the tenth Commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humour, and kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart: in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her." Burns next proceeded to Dalswinton, and walked over the unoccupied farms; but, though he expressed himself pleased with the general aspect of the valley, he declined for the time the handsome offer of a four-nineteen years' lease on his own terms; and, saying he would return in autumn, departed. "From my view of the lands," he said in a letter to Nicol, "and Mr. Miller's reception of my bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended, but still they are but slender."

The friends of Burns considered this an agricultural rather than a poetic tour. It partook of the nature of both; remarks on varieties of soil; rotation of crop, and on land, pastoral or cultivated, mingle curiously with sketches of personal character, notices of visits paid to hoary ruins, or to scenes memorable in song. His curiosity was excited: his heart a little touched, but neither the fine scenery, nor the lovely women, produced any serious effect on his muse. The sole poetic fruit of the excursion is an epistle to Creech, dated Selkirk, May 13, and written, he says, "Nearly extempore, in a solitary inn, after a miserable wet day's riding." It is, in its nature, complimentary: the dripping sky, and, "the worst inn's worst room," induced the Poet to make light of

> "The Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
> And Ettrick banks, now roaring red,"

and think of the wit and the wine of Edinburgh, and see, in imagination, philosophers, poets,

> "And toothy critics by the score,
> In bloody raw,"

crowding to the levee of the patronizing bibliopole.

After an absence of six busy, and to him eventful, months, Burns returned to Mossgiel the 8th of June, 1787. His mother, a woman of few words, met him with tears of joy in her eyes at the threshold, saying, "Oh, Robert!" He had left her hearth in the darkness of night, and he came back in the brightness of day; he went away an obscure and almost nameless adventurer, and he returned with a name, round which there was already a halo not destined soon to be eclipsed. In his own eyes, his early aspirations after fame seemed as hopeless as "the blind groping of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave;" he had now made his way to the mountain-top, his pipe was at his lips, and all the country round was charmed with his melody. The last lines which he expected to measure in Caledonia were not yet uttered, and he who, to use his words, was lately

> "Darkling dern'd in glens and hallows,
> And hunted, as was William Wallace,
> By constables, those blackguard fallows,
> And bailies baith,"

was now a poet of the highest order; the fit and accepted companion of the proud and the lordly, with gold, the fruits of his genius, in his pocket, and more promised by the muse. Those who formerly were cold or careless, now approached to praise and to welcome him; while his mother, who never imagined that aught good could come from idle rhyme, received all as something dropped from heaven, and rejoiced in the fame of her son.

He remained at home some ten or twelve days. He went little out. His acquaintance with Jean Armour was probably not at that time renewed, nor did he visit more than one friend or two; his chief occupation was in writing to his literary acquaintances, and discussing with his brother Gilbert the chances of success in agriculture. He was restless—he was not satisfied with his position in society; he neither belonged to the high nor to the low. Rank, he felt, had taken his hand coldly to squeeze and to drop it, while his rustic brethren looked upon him as having risen above their condition. The feelings which agitated him are forcibly—nay, darkly, expressed in a letter to Nicol, dated Mauchline, June 18:—"I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of any thing generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity—the intrepid, unyielding independence—the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, Satan. 'Tis true, I have just now a little cash; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith—that noxious planet, so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon. Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for, the walks of business. Add to all that, thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with

step-bewitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless bard, till pop, 'he falls, like Lucifer, never to hope again.' God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind .... The many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think, I have, in life, I have felt along the lines, and d——n them, they are almost all of them of such frail contexture that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune."

["Among those," says Lockhart, "who having formerly 'eyed him askance,' now appeared sufficiently ready to court his society, were the family of Jean Armour. Burns's affection for the beautiful young woman had outlived his resentment of her compliance with her father's commands in the preceding summer; and, from the time of this reconciliation, it is probable he always looked forward to a permanent union with the mother of his children.

"Burns at least fancied himself to be busy with serious plans for his future establishment; and was very naturally disposed to avail himself, as far as he could, of the opportunities of travel and observation, which an interval of leisure, destined probably to be a short one, might present. Moreover, in spite of his gloomy language, a specimen of which has just been quoted, we are not to doubt that he derived much pleasure from witnessing the extensive popularity of his writings, and from the flattering homage he was sure to receive in his own person, in the various districts of his native country; nor can any one wonder that, after the state of high excitement in which he had spent the winter and spring, he, fond as he was of his family, and eager to make them partakers in all his good fortune, should have, just at this time, found himself incapable of sitting down contentedly, for any considerable period together, in so humble and quiet a circle as that of Mossgiel."]

In this mood he left Mauchline, and hurried to Edinburgh.

In some of the doings of Burns during the latter half of the year 1787, we see a mind "unfitted with an aim;" he moved much about without any visible purpose in his motions. We have now to follow him northward in three successive and hurried excursions, in which he passed into the Western Highlands, examined Stirling-shire, and penetrated eastward as far as Inverness. In his first tour he was mounted on Jenny Geddes, named after the devout virago who threw a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head—perhaps the lady celebrated in song:—

"Jenny Geddes was the gossip
Put the gown upon the Bishop."

Of this journey we know little that is pleasant. Burns seems to have been possessed with a spirit of ill-humour during the greater part of the expedition. He first bent his steps to Carron, and, desiring to see the celebrated Foundry, was repulsed from the gate, rudely as he thought: for he put his complaint into no very decorous language:—

"We came na' here to view your warks
In hopes to be mair wise,
But only, lest we gang to hell,
It might be nae surprise."

He then proceeded to Stirling. The Poet was an intense lover of his country and her glory: the displeasure with which the people of Scotland regarded the Union, which had removed all visible symbols of power and independence, was not in those days subsided; and, when he looked on the Hall, where princes once ruled and Scottish parliaments assembled, and reflected that it was laid in ruins by a prince of the house of Hanover, he gave vent to his proper indignation in the following lines:—

"Here Stuarts once in glory reigned,
And laws for Scotland's weal ordained;
But now unroof'd their palace stands,
Their sceptre's sway'd by other hands;
The injur'd Stuart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills the throne."

Two other lines followed, forming the bitter point to the epigram—they were remembered in after-days to the poet's injury. He seems not to have been very sensible at that time of his imprudence;—for some one said, "Burns, this will do you no good."—"I shall reprove myself," he said; and wrote these aggravating words:

"Rash mortal, and slanderous poet, thy name
Shall no longer appear in the records of fame;
Does not know that old Mansfield, who writes like the Bible,
Says, the more 'tis a truth, Sir, the more 'tis a libel?"

Such satire was not likely to pass without remonstrance; Hamilton, of Gladsmuir, wrote a reply, wherein he lamented that a mind,

"Where Genius lights her brightest fires,"

should disdain truth, and law, and justice;

"And, skulking with a villain's aim,
Thus basely stab his monarch's fame."

There are few who will not concur in the propriety of this rebuke. This writer, however, resolved to be prophet, as well as poet and priest:—

"Yes, Burns, 'tis o'er—thy race is run,
And shades receive thy setting sun:
These few rash lines shall damn thy name,
And blast thy hopes of future fame."

Poetic sarcasms on ruling powers may keep a man from rising in the church where princes are patrons, but they have no influence on his

ascent up Parnassus: of this no one was more aware than Burns, nor was he long at a loss for an answer to the minister of Gladsmuir,

> "Like Esop's lion, Burns says, sore I feel
> All others scorn—but damn that ass's heel."

After leaving Stirling, we hear no more of Burns till, having traversed a portion of the Western Highlands, passed through Inverary, and made his appearance at Arrochar, he thus addresses Ainslie: "I write you this on my tour through a country where savage streams tumble over savage mountains; thinly overspread with savage flocks, which starvingly support as savage inhabitants. My last stage was Inverary—to-morrow night's stage Dumbarton. I ought sooner to have answered your kind letter, but you know I am a man of many sins." This was on the 28th of June. At Inverary, he found the principal inn filled by a visiting party to the Duke of Argyle, who engrossed all the attention of the landlord; and the poor Bard, mounted on a sorry mare, without friend or lackey, was neglected. He avenged himself with unmerited bitterness:—

> "Whoe'er he be who sojourns here,
> I pity much his case,
> Unless he's come to wait upon
> The lord their god, his Grace;
> There's naething here but Highland pride,
> But Highland cauld and hunger;
> If Providence has sent me here
> 'Twas surely in his anger."

If the Poet wrote these lines on the window of the inn, he must have administered the spur at his departure with little mercy to the sides of Jenny Geddes; for Highland wrath is as hot as Highland hospitality.

Burns recovered his composure of mind before reaching Dumbarton; he had, moreover, fallen into very pleasant company. Having dined with a hospitable Highland gentleman, he was introduced to a merry party, and danced till the ladies left them, at three in the morning.—"Our dancing," says the Bard, "was none of the French or English insipid formal movements. The ladies sung Scotch songs like Angels; then we flew at 'Bab at the bowster,' 'Tulloch-gorum,' 'Loch-Erroch side,' &c., like midges sporting in the mottie sun, or craws prognosticating a storm in a hairst day. When the dear lasses left us, we ranged round the bowl till the good-fellow hour of six; except a few minutes that we went out to pay our devotions to the glorious lamp of day peering over the towering top of Benlomond. We all kneeled. Our worthy landlord's son held the bowl, each man a full glass in his hand, and I, as priest, repeated some rhyming nonsense: like Thomas the Rhymer's prophecies, I suppose."

These Highland high-jinks were not yet concluded. After a few hours' sleep they dined at another good fellow's house, and consequently pushed the bottle; Burns then mounted his mare, and, accompanied by two friends, rode along Lochlomond side on his way to Dumbarton.—"We found ourselves," he says, "'no very fou, but gayly yet,' and I rode soberly, till by came a Highlandman at the gallop, on a tolerably good horse, but which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather. We scorned to be out-galloped by a Highlandman, so off we started, whip-and-spur. My companions fell sadly a-stern; but my old mare, Jenny Geddes, one of the Rosinante family, strained past the Highlandman, in spite of all his efforts with the hair halter. Just as I was passing him, Donald wheeled his horse, as if to cross before me to mar my progress, when down came his horse, and threw his rider's breekless bottom into a clipt hedge, and down came Jenny Geddes over all, and my bardship between her and the Highlandman's horse. Jenny trode over me with such cautious reverence that matters were not so bad as might well have been expected; so I came off with a few cuts and bruises, and a thorough resolution to be a pattern of sobriety for the future. As for the rest of my acts and my wars, and all my wise sayings, and why my mare was called Jenny Geddes, they shall be recorded, in a few weeks hence at Linlithgow, in the chronicles of your memory."

Burns returned to Mauchline by the way of Glasgow, and remained with his mother during the latter part of the month of July. He renewed his intercourse with the family of the Armours. Jean's heart still beat tenderly towards "the plighted husband of her youth;" and Burns, much as his pride was wounded, could not help regarding her with affection. He had, as yet, no very defined notion of what he should do in the world: he trusted to time and chance. "I have yet fixed," he thus writes to a friend, "on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am just as usual—a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon—I was going to say a wife, too; but that must never be my blessed lot. I am afraid I have almost ruined one source, the principal one indeed, of my former happiness—that eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish rapture. I have no paradisiacal evening interviews, stolen from the restless cares and prying inhabitants of this weary world. I have only * * * *. This last is one of your distant acquaintances, has a fine figure, and elegant manners; and, in the train of some great folks whom you know, has seen the politest quarters in Europe. I do like her a good deal; but what piques me is her conduct at the commencement of our acquaintance. I frequently visited her when I was in ———,

and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured, in my careless way, to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms; and after her return to ———, I wrote to her in the same style. Miss, construing my words farther, I suppose, than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning; and wrote me an answer which measured me out very completely what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climate of her favour. But I am an old hawk at the sport, and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent reply as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop, down at my foot, like Corporal Trim's hat." The young lady to whom the poet alludes in this letter was very beautiful and very proud—it is said she gave his bardship such a specimen of both her pride and temper as

"Made poor Robin stand abeigh."

"I am but a younger son of the house of Parnassus; and, like other younger sons of great families, I may intrigue, if I choose to run all risks, but must not marry."

It is plain that Burns regarded the burning of his marriage lines as not only destroying all evidence of his engagements with Jean Armour, but as a deliberate revocation of vows, on her part, which released him from the responsibilities of wedlock. Nay, this seems to have been the notion of graver men; for the Poet thus writes to David Bryce, July 17th, 1786:—"Poor Jean is come back to Mauchline. I went to call for her, but her mother forbade me the house. I have already appeared publicly in church, and was indulged in the liberty of standing in my own seat. I do this to get a certificate as a bachelor, which Mr. Auld has promised me." In this I see the anxiety of Mr. Armour to obliterate all traces of the marriage, and the concurrence, at least, of the Poet in the proceeding. Robert Burns and Jean Armour might permit their friends to regard them as unmarried, and, if such was their own pleasure, call themselves single; but their children were not, I apprehend, affected in their claims to legitimacy by this disavowal on the part of their parents; the law would, I think, enforce their rights for them in spite of the disclamation of both father and mother. Nay, I suspect, the law refuses to recognize any other dissolution of wedlock than what is effected by civil or ecclesiastical authority. However this may be, the Poet affected all the freedom of speech and action which custom concedes to bachelors, and seemed oftener than once on the point of unwittingly agitating the question, whether an Ayr-shire lass or an Edinburgh lady should plead a property in his hand.

The second excursion of Burns towards the north was made in the company of Dr. Adair, of Harrow-gate, whom chance made into a comrade, and who fortunately retained the particulars of the journey in his memory. He set out early in August from Edinburgh, passed through Linlithgow, and made his appearance again at the gates of Carron Foundry—they were opened with an apology for former rudeness, which mollified the bard; and he beheld in their tremendous furnaces and broiling labours a resemblance to the cavern of the Cyclops. A resemblance of a less classical kind had before occurred to him. From Carron he hurried to Stirling, that he might break and replace the pane of glass in the inn window, on which he had written those rash and injurious lines already alluded to; and then he proceeded to visit Ramsay of Ochtertyre, whose romantic residence on the Teith he admired greatly, and whose conversation, rife as it was with knowledge of Scottish literature, was altogether after his own heart. This visit was brief, but full of interest. The laird of Ochtertyre had a memory filled with old traditions and old songs. He had written some ingenious essays on the olden poetry, displaying feeling and taste; and moreover, the walls of his house were hung with long Latin inscriptions, much to the wonder of the unlearned Bard of Kyle.

They discussed fit topics for the muse—a rustic drama, and Scottish Georgics. "What beautiful landscapes of rural life and manners," says Ramsay, "might not have been expected from a pencil so faithful and forcible as his, which could have exhibited scenes as familiar and interesting as those in the Gentle Shepherd, which every one who knows our swains, in their unadulterated state, instantly recognizes as true to nature. But to have executed either of these plans, steadiness and abstraction from company were wanted, not genius." Of Burns' power of conversation, he says, "I have been in the company of many men of genius, some of them poets, but never witnessed such flashes of intellectual brightness as from him—the impulse of the moment—sparks of celestial fire." It is painful to think that the celestial sayings of the Poet have vanished from men's memories, while the less mental and grosser things remain. He continued two days on the Teith, and then proceeded to Harvieston, where he was received with much respect and kindness by Mrs. Hamilton and her daughters. Here he saw Charlotte Hamilton for the first time.—"She is not only beautiful," he thus wrote to her brother Gavin, of Mauchline, "but lovely. Her form is elegant, her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness, and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise

of our riding to the Falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress :—

> 'Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one would almost say her body thought.'

Her eyes are fascinating ; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind."

The account of Dr. Adair supplies some circumstances which Burns has omitted :—

"At Stirling we met with a company of travellers from Edinburgh, among whom was a character in many respects congenial with that of Burns. This was Nicol, one of the teachers of the High Grammar School at Edinburgh—the same wit and power of conversation ; the same fondness for convivial society, and thoughtlessness of to-morrow characterised both. Jacobitical principles in politics were also common to both of them ; and these have been suspected, since the Revolution of France, to have given place in each to opinions apparently opposite. I regret that I have preserved no *memorabilia* of their conversation. Many songs were sung, which I mention for the sake of observing that, when Burns was called upon in his turn, he was accustomed, instead of singing, to recite one or other of his own shorter poems, with tone and emphasis which, though not correct or harmonious, were impressive and pathethic.

"From Stirling we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon to Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, then inhabited by Mrs. Hamilton, with the younger part of whose family Burns had been previously acquainted. He introduced me to the family ; and there was formed my first acquaintance with Mrs. Hamilton's eldest daughter, to whom I have been married for many years. Thus was I indebted to Burns for a connexion from which I have derived, and expect further to derive, much happiness.

"During a residence of about ten days at Harvieston, we made excursions to various parts of the surrounding scenery, particularly Castle-Campbell, the ancient seat of the family of Argyle ; and the famous cataract of the Devon, called the Cauldron-Linn ; and the Rumbling-Bridge, a single broad arch, thrown by the devil, if tradition is to be believed, across the river, at about the height of a hundred feet above its bed. I am surprised that none of these scenes should have called forth an exertion of Burns' muse ; but I doubt if he had much taste for the picturesque. I well remember that the ladies at Harvieston, who accompanied us on the jaunt, expressed their disappointment at his not expressing in more glowing and fervid language his impressions of the Cauldron-Linn scene — certainly highly sublime, and somewhat horrible. A visit to Mrs. Bruce, of Clackmannan, a lady above ninety, the lineal descendant of that race which gave the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, interested his feelings powerfully. This venerable dame, with characteristic dignity, informed me, on my observing that I believed she was descended from the family of Robert Bruce, that Robert Bruce was sprung from her family. She was in possession of the hero's helmet and two-handed sword, with which she conferred on Burns and myself the honour of knighthood, observing that she had a better right to confer that title than *some people*. Her political tenets were as Jacobitical as the Poet's, a conformity which contributed not a little to the cordiality of our reception. She gave us as her first toast after dinner, 'Awa uncos,' or away with the strangers ;—who these strangers were you will readily understand.

"Mrs. Adair corrects me by saying it should be 'Hoohi uncos'—a sound used by the shepherds in directing their dogs to drive away the sheep.

"At Dunfermline, we visited the ruined abbey, and the abbey-church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. Here I mounted the *cutty-stool*, or stool of repentance, assuming the character of a penitent for fornication ; while Burns, in the character of priest, admonished me from the pulpit on the enormity of my transgression, and the frequency of its occurrence. The ludicrous reproof and exhortation which he addressed to me were, of course, parodied from what had been delivered to himself in Ayrshire, were he assured me he had once been one of seven who mounted the *seat of shame* together.

"In the churchyard, Burns knelt down, and kissed with much fervour the broad flag-stone which covered the grave of the great restorer of Scottish independence, Robert Bruce, and execrated the want of respect shewn by the local authorities to the dust of the first of Scottish heroes.* They returned to Edinburgh by the way of Kinross and Queensferry.

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* According to Fordun, Robert Bruce was buried in the middle of the choir of Dunfermline Abbey. Barbour describes the interment of this illustrious Scottish monarch in these lines :—

> 'They have had him to Dunfermline
> And him solemnly yirded syne,
> In a fair tomb into the quire,
> Bishops and prelates that were there
> Assoilzed him, when the service
> Was done, as they best could device,
> And syne upon the other day,
> Sorry and wo they went their way ;
> And he debowelled was cleanly,
> And also balmed syne full richly ;
> And the worthy Lord of Douglas,
> His heart as it forsaken was,
> Received as in great dewtie,
> With fair and great solemnitie.'

The neglect so much execrated by Burns has been since repaired. When the new parish church of Dunfermline was erected in 1818, it was made to enclose the burial place of the kings, and on this occasion the tomb of the Bruce was opened. The body of the hero was found reduced to a skeleton. The lead in which it had been wrapped was still entire, and even some of a fine linen cloth, embroidered with

The complaint of Dr. Adair and the Harvieston ladies that Burns broke out into no poetic raptures on visiting the magnificence of the Caldron-Linn, or the melancholy splendour of Castle-Campbell, and that, because he was next to silent, they concluded he had no taste for the picturesque, may be assigned to other reasons:—he disliked to be tutored in matters of taste, and could not endure that one should run shouting before him whenever any fine object appeared. On one occasion of this kind, a lady at the Poet's side said, "Burns, have you nothing to say of this?"—"Nothing, madam," he replied, glancing at the leader of the party, "for an ass is braying over it." One evening, Lockhart relates, as the Poet passed near the Carron Foundry, when the furnaces were casting forth flames, his companion exclaimed, "Look, Burns! look! good heavens, look! look—what a glorious sight!"—"Sir," said the Bard, clapping spurs to Jenny Geddes, "I would not look! look! at your bidding, if it were the mouth of hell!" When he visited Creehope-Linn, in Dumfries-shire, at every turn of the stream and bend of the wood he was called loudly upon to admire the shelving sinuosities of the burn, and the caverned splendour of its all but inaccessible banks—it was thought by those with him that he did not shew rapture enough—"I could not admire it more, Sir," said the Poet, "If He who made it were to ask me to do it."

There were other reasons for the Poet being "so bashful and so grave" in the company of the Harvieston ladies. From his frequent praise in prose, from his admiration in song, and the general tone of his conversation, I cannot avoid concluding that he thought more than favourably of Charlotte Hamilton. In the presence of female loveliness, Burns could see no landscape beauty; with Charlotte beside him, the Caldron-Linn seemed an ordinary cascade, and Castle-Gloom not at all romantic. There is no positive evidence that he paid his addresses to the "Fairest Maid of Devon Banks;" but he did much to render himself acceptable, and, as an oblique way of making his approach, he strove, and not without success, to merit the good opinion of her companion, Margaret Chalmers, a young lady of beauty as well as sense, now Mrs. Hay of Edinburgh. I can give but an imperfect account of the progress of the Poet's passion, for some twelve or fourteen of his most carefully written and gently expressed letters were, in an evil hour, thrown into the fire by Charlotte Hamilton, and all the record we have are his songs and what is contained in his correspondence.

Of the lyrical lime-twigs which the Poet laid on the banks of the Devon, he gives the following intimation, in a letter to Margaret Chalmers:—"Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment. The air is admirable; true old Highland; it was the tune of a Gaelic song which an Inverness lady sung me, and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing, for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go in Johnson's next number, so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate, though I am convinced it is very well; and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only sincere, but just." The Poet alludes to his sweet and graceful song, "The Banks of the Devon." The praise is figurative:—

> "Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
> And England, triumphant, display her proud rose,
> A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
> Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows."

Having secured her immortality in song, and probably observed the coldness with which his harmonious compliments were received, Burns complains, obliquely, of Charlotte's want of sympathy, by imagining that his words have no longer any fascination for woman. "My rhetoric," he says, "seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind; I have seen the day—but that is 'a tale of other years.'—In my conscience, I believe that my heart has been so often on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night; I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'etre un miserable esclave:* as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure—permanent pleasure—'which the world cannot give nor take away,' I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth."

The third and last tour of Burns was performed in the company of Nicol. The master of the High-school had made himself agreeable to the Poet by an intrepid mode of expression, and an admiration of whatever was hair-brained and sentimental. He was

> "A fiery ether-cap; a fractious chiel,"

and altogether one of those companions who require prudent management. They commenced their tour in a post chaise, on the 25th of August, 1787. Burns kept a journal of the journey: it is now before me, and begins thus:

gold, which had formed his shroud. His bones having been deposited in a new leaden coffin, half an inch thick, seven feet long, two feet five inches broad, and two feet in depth, into which was poured melted pitch to preserve them, he was re-

interred with much state and solemnity, by the Barons of the Exchequer, many of the most distinguished noblemen and gentlemen of the county being present. The tomb of the Bruce is immediately under the pulpit of the new church.

—"I leave Edinburgh for a northern tour, in company with my good friend Mr. Nicol, whose originality of humour promises me much entertainment.—Linlithgow—a fertile improved country.—West Lothian;—the more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportion the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Merse, Roxburgh, &c.; and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste—a 'man of feeling'—will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds, of the peasantry in Ayrshire (peasantry they are all below the justice of peace) than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when he, at the same time, considers the Vandalism of their plough-folks, &c. I carry this idea so far that an unenclosed, half-improved country is to me actually more agreeable, and gives me more pleasure as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden." The Poet refused to look on the world through the coloured spectacles of political economists; he preferred happiness to wealth.

The soil about Linlinthgow he considered as light and thin; the town carries the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur, and the situation charmingly retired and rural.—"The old Royal Palace," says his journal, "is a tolerable fine but melancholy ruin, sweetly situated on a small elevation by the brink of a loch. Shewn the room where the beautiful injured Mary Queen of Scots was born. A very pretty good old Gothic church, with the infamous stool of repentance standing, in the old Romish way, on a lofty situation. What a poor pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship! Dirty, narrow, and squalid; stuck in a corner of old Popish grandeur, such as Linlithgow, and much more, Melrose! Ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters. Go to my friend Smith's at Avon print-field—find nobody but Mrs. Meller, an agreeable, sensible, modest, good lady; as useful, but not so ornamental, as Fielding's Miss Western—not rigidly polite *a la Français*, but easy, hospitable, and housewifely. An old lady from Paisley, a Mrs. Lawson, whom I promise to call for in Paisley—like old Lady W——, and still more like Mrs. C——, her conversation is pregnant with strong sense and just remark, but, like them, a certain air of self-importance and a *duresse* in the eye, seem to indicate, as the Ayrshire wife observed of her cow, that

'She had a mind o' her ain!'"

He continues his tour, and his remarks—

"Pleasant view of Dunfermline, and the rest of the fertile coast of Fife, as we go down to that dirty, ugly place, Borrowstoness—see a horse-race, and call on a friend of Mr. Nicol, a Bailie Cowan, of whom I know too little to attempt his portrait. Come through the rich Carse of Falkirk to pass the night. At Falkirk nothing remarkable, except the grave of Sir John the Grahame, over which, in the succession of time, four stones have been placed.—Camelon, the ancient metropolis of the Picts, now a small village in the neighbourhood of Falkirk.—Cross the grand canal to Carron.—Come past Larbert and admire a fine monument of cast-iron erected by Bruce, the African traveller, to his wife. Pass Dunipace—a place laid out with fine taste—a charming amphitheatre, bounded by Denny village, and pleasant seats. The Carron, running down the bosom of the whole, makes it one of the most charming little prospects I have seen. Dine at Auchinbowie—Mr. Monro an excellent, worthy old man,—Miss Monro, an amiable, sensible, sweet young woman, much resembling Mrs. Grierson. Come on to Bannockburn; shewn the old house where James III. finished so tragically his unfortunate life;—the field of Bannockburn,—the hole where glorious Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass uninterested.—I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen coming o'er the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers: noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe! I see them meet in glorious-triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence!"*

["Here," says Lockhart, "we have the germ of Burns' famous *Ode on the Battle of Bannockburn.*"]

"Sic words spake they of their king;
And for his hie undertaking
Ferleyit and yernit him for to see,
That with him aye was wont to be."

I prefer, however, the account briefly rendered in one of his letters to all the rapture of his journal.—"Stirling, August 26.—This morning I knelt at the tomb of Sir John the Grahame, the gallant friend of the immortal Wallace, and two hours ago I said a fervent prayer for old Caledonia, over the hole in a blue whinstone, where Robert the Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn; and just now, from Stirling Castle, I have seen, by the setting sun, the glorious prospect of the windings of Forth through the rich

* ["In the last words of Burns' note above quoted," says Lockhart, "he perhaps glances at a beautiful trait of old Barbour, where he describes Bruce's soldiers crowding around him at the conclusion of one of his hard-fought days, with as much curiosity as if they had never seen his person before.]

Carse of Stirling, and skirting the equally rich Carse of Falkirk." The ancient glory of his country, and the deeds of her heroes, were ever present to his mind.

In his way to Crieff, Burns saw the Ochel-hills, the Devon, the Teith, and the Allan; he rode up the romantic Earn; visited Strathallan, "a fine country, but little improved;" Auchtertyre, where "grows the aik," as his own inimitable song says, and, going up Glen-Almond, he visited the "traditionary grave" of Ossian. Making his way to Taymouth, he gazed long and earnestly on the spreading vale, the princely towers, and the expanding sea: his journal merely states "*Taymouth—described in rhyme.*" This alludes to the verses written with a pencil over the mantel-piece of the parlour in the inn at Kenmore; some of which, says Lockhart, are among his best English heroics—

"Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods:
The incessant roar of headlong-tumbling floods."
Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
And look through nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of fate half-reconcil'd
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
And disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to sooth her bitter, rankling wounds:
Here heart-struck grief might heaven-ward stretch her scan,
And injur'd worth forget, and pardon man."

He passed through Dunkeld, visited the Lyon river, and knelt and said prayers in the Druid's temple, a smaller Stonehenge: of this piece of antiquity, he says, "Three circles of stone—the outermost sunk—the second has thirteen stones remaining—the innermost has eight—two large detached ones, like a gate to the south-east." Of Aberfeldy he briefly writes—"described in rhyme." He composed "The Birks of Aberfeldy" as he stood by the falls; the scene is truly beautiful, and the song rivals in truth and effect the landscape. Thence he proceeded to Birnam top: looked down the Tay, and visited a Hermitage on the Bran-water dedicated to the genius of Ossian.—"Breakfast with Dr. Stewart; Neil Gow plays—a short, stout-built, honest Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest social brow; an interesting face, marking strong sense; kind open-heartedness, mixed with unmistrusting simplicity;† visit his house—Margaret Gow."

He next passed up Loch Tummel to Blair. "Fascally, a beautiful romantic nest—wild grandeur of the Pass of Gilliecrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dundee's stone."* In remembrance of this, in one of his after songs he makes a soldier of Mackay's say—

"The bauld Pitcur fell in a fur,
And Clavers got a clankie,
Else I'd hae fed an Athole gled
On the braes of Killiecrankie."

From the battle field, Burns proceeded to the palace of the Duke of Athol, at Blair, where he was welcomed with much kindness and courtesy:—"Sup with the duchess; easy and happy from the manners of the family; confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker." Such is his brief record of this event; Professor Walker, who was at this period tutor to the family of Athol, merited the eulogium, and more; no sooner did he observe Nicol than, knowing the manners of the man, he prepared an entertainment according to the nature of the fierce pedagogue. A fishing-rod and a servant to attend him by day, and choice wine and a snug table at night, charmed Nicol, and left Burns leisure to converse with the Duke and Duchess, and visit the scenes around, which he declared were fine by nature, but hurt by bad taste. Of the visit and visiter, the Professor has given us the following account:—

"On reaching Blair, he sent me notice of his arrival (as I had previously been acquainted with him), and I hastened to meet him at the inn. The Duke, to whom he brought a letter of introduction, was from home; but the Duchess, being informed of his arrival, gave him an invitation to sup and sleep at Athol House. Burns accepted the invitation; but, as the hour of supper was at some distance, he begged I would in the interval be his guide through the grounds. It was already growing dark; yet the softened, though faint and uncertain, view of their beauties, which the moonlight afforded us, seemed exactly suited to the state of his feelings at the time. I had often, like others, experienced the pleasures which arise from the sublime or elegant landscape, but I never saw those feelings so intense as in Burns. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, from which there is a noble waterfall, he threw him-

* [It is *not* true, says Lockhart, that this stone marks the spot where Dundee received his death wound.]

† [Another northern bard has sketched this eminent musician thus:—

"The blythe Strathspey springs up, reminding some
Of nights when Gow's old arm (nor old the tale,)
Unceasing, save when reeking cans went round,
Made heart and heel leap light as bounding roe.
Alas! no more shall we behold that look
So venerable, yet so blent with mirth,
And festive joy sedate; that ancient garb
Unvaried,—tartan hose, and bonnet blue!
No more shall Beauty's partial eye draw forth
The full intoxication of his strain,
Mellifluous, strong, exuberantly rich!
No more, amid the pauses of the dance,
Shall he repeat those measures that, in days
Of other years, could soothe a falling prince,
And light his visage with a transient smile
Of melancholy joy,—like autumn sun
Gilding a sear tree with a passing beam!
Or play to sportive children on the green
Dancing at gloamin' hour; on willing cheer
With strains unbought, the shepherd's bridal day."

GRAHAME—*British Georgics.*

self on the heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. I cannot help thinking it might have been here that he conceived the idea of the following lines, which he afterwards introduced into his poem on Bruar Water, when only fancying such a combination of objects as were now present to his eye:—

"Or, by the reapers' nightly beam,
Mild, chequering through the trees,
Rave to my darkly-dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze."

It was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to quit this spot, and to be introduced in proper time for supper. My curiosity was great to see how Burns would conduct himself in company so different from what he had been accustomed to. His manner was unembarrassed, plain, and firm. He appeared to have complete reliance on his own native good sense for directing his behaviour. He seemed at once to perceive and appreciate what was due to the company and to himself, and never to forget a proper respect for the separate species of dignity belonging to each. He did not arrogate conversation, but when led into it he spoke with ease, propriety, and manliness. He tried to exert his abilities, because he knew it was ability alone gave him a title to be there. The Duchess's fine young family attracted much of his admiration; he drank their healths as 'honest men and bonnie lasses,' an idea which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed his poem. Next day I took a ride with him through some of the most romantic parts of that neighbourhood, and was highly gratified by his conversation. As a specimen of his happiness of conception and strength of expression, I will mention a remark which he made on his fellow-traveller, who was walking at the time a few paces before us. He was a man of a robust but clumsy person; and while Burns was expressing to me the value he entertained for him, on account of his vigorous talents, although they were clouded at times by coarseness of manners; 'in short,' he added, 'his mind is like his body, he has a confounded strong in-kneed sort of a soul.' Much attention was paid to Burns both before and after the duke's return, of which he was perfectly sensible, without being vain; and at his departure I recommended to him, as the most appropriate return he could make, to write some descriptive verses on any of the scenes with which he had been so much delighted."

[It appears that the impression made by our poet on the noble family of Athol was in a high degree favourable; it is certain he was charmed with the reception he received from them, and he often mentioned the two days he spent at Athol-house as among the happiest of his life. He was warmly invited to prolong his stay, but sacrificed his inclinations to his engagement with Mr. Nicol.]

It was the wish of the Duke that Burns should visit the banks of the Bruar, where the scenery is bold and naked. The Poet, accustomed to the woody banks of the Ayr and the Doon, was not disposed to admire the barren sublimity of the Bruar, and accordingly wrote his "Humble Petition," in which the water requests the umbrage of birch and hazel from the hands of the noble proprietor.

"Let lofty firs and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed!

"Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn."

This was almost the only wish which the Poet ever uttered that any pains were taken to gratify. The banks of the Bruar are now clothed as he prescribed—the trouts are sheltered from the sun by the over-hanging boughs—the songster's nest is to be seen in its season,

"And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace."

Burns hastened his departure from Blair; two of his biographers express regret at this. Had he remained, they observe, but a few days, he would have met Lord Melville, who had the chief management of the internal affairs of Scotland, and who "might not improbably have been induced to bestow that consideration on the claims of the Poet which, in the absence of any personal acquaintance, Burns' works ought to have received at his hands." Lord Melville admired, with the Poet, woman's beauty, wine's allurements, and rough intrepidity of conversation: there were no other links to unite them. It was more to the purpose that Burns, at the table of Athole, made the acquaintance of Graham of Fintry, who has the merit of doing the little that was done for him in the way of patronage.

Historic and poetic scenes—spots where battles had been fought and songs sung, were most in request with Burns. On quitting Blair he shaped his course towards the Spey, and followed the stream. The straths he found rich, the mountains wild and magnificent. He saw Rothemurche and the gloomy forests of Glenmore, and, passing rapidly through Strathspey, halted an hour at a wild inn, and visited Sir James Grant, whose lady he pronounces a sweet and pleasant body. "I passed," said he to his brother Gilbert, "through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows and glens gloomy and savage." He came upon the Findhorn "in mist and darkness," visited Castle-Cawdor, where Macbeth murdered Duncan, saw the bed in which tradition says the

king was stabbed; hurried on to Fort-George, and thence to Inverness. He took a hurried look at Loch Ness with its wild braes, and the General's Hut; visited Urquhart Castle, with its fine strath; and was so rapt at the Falls of Fyers that he broke out into verse.

Short as the Poet's stay was in Inverness, he found leisure to admire the classic capital of the eastern Highlands. The ladies, with their snooded hair and simple elegance of dress; the jail, which was pronounced unable to retain a prisoner who belonged to a clan; the fort, raised during the days of Cromwell to keep the land in awe; and the beautiful Hill of Fairies, near the river side, claimed by tradition as the grave of Thomas the Rhymer, were not looked upon without emotion and remark. On leaving Inverness he passed over Culloden Moor, a place calculated to awaken sad reflections. On that heath, so fatal to the hopes of our ancient line of princes—a heath desolate and blasted, and only relieved in its brown barrenness by the green mounds raised over the bones of the brave—the Poet paused, and was long lost in thought; the fruit of his meditations was a lyric, which cannot easily be equalled for simplicity and pathos:—

"The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en an' morn she cries, alas!
And ay the saut tear blins her ee.
Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,—
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear—
My father dear, and brethren three."

The Poet reached Kilravock in time for breakfast; his record of this halt is short, but to the point:—"Old Mrs. Rose: sterling sense, warm heart, strong passions, and honest pride, all in an uncommon degree. Mrs. Rose, jun., a little milder than the mother; this, perhaps, owing to her being younger. Mrs. Rose and Mr. Grant accompany us to Kildrummie. Two young ladies: Miss Rose, who sung two Gaelic songs, beautiful and lovely; Miss Sophia Brodie, most agreeable and amiable; both of them gentle, mild; the sweetest creatures on earth—and happiness be with them!" Of this visit the Poet had long a grateful recollection: "There was something in my reception at Kilravock," he says, in a letter to Mrs. Rose, "so different from the cold, obsequious, dancing-school bow of politeness, that it almost got into my head that friendship had occupied her ground without the intermediate march of acquaintance. I wish I could transcribe, or rather transfuse, into language, the glow of my heart. My ready fancy, with colours more mellow than life itself, painted the beautifully wild scenery of Kilravock—the venerable grandeur of the castle—the spreading woods—the winding river, gladly leaving his unsightly, heathy source, lingering with apparent delight as he passed the Fairy-Walk at the foot of the garden—your late distressful anxieties—your present enjoyments—your dear little angel, the pride of your hopes—my aged friend, venerable in worth and years, whose loyalty and other virtues will strongly entitle her to the support of the Almighty Spirit here, and His peculiar favour in a happier state of existence. You cannot imagine, madam, how much such feelings delight me; they are the dearest proofs of my own immortality."

Burns, it would appear by a letter from Mrs. Rose, had been hurried from her fire-side by the importunities of Nicol; the two friends now continued their journey in a colder mood; the diary was sadly neglected. It affords, however, sundry touches of character:—"Dine at Nairn; fall in with a pleasant enough gentleman—Dr. Stewart, who had been abroad with his father in the 'Forty-Five;' and Mr. Falconer, a spare, irascible, warm-hearted Norlan and a non-juror." He passed by Kinloss, where Edward the First halted in his conquering march, intimidated as much by wild woods and savage hills as by the warlike people. He admired in Elgin the remains of Scotland's noblest cathedral, and examined at Forres the enormous slab of grey stone, in shape resembling a sword-blade, erected as a monument of peace between Sweno of Denmark, and Malcolm II. Something like sculptures on the sides, antiquarians aver, intimate a drawn battle and a treaty of peace.—"Mr. Brodie tells me," says the Poet, "that the moor where Shakspeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting is still haunted, and that the country folk won't pass it by night." * * * * "Venerable ruins of Elgin Abbey—a grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but not near so beautiful."

On reaching Fochabers, the Poet left his companion at an inn, and went to pay his respects to the Duke and Duchess of Gordon, to whose splendid mansion the village is as a suburb.—"He was received," says Currie, "with the utmost hospitality and kindness; and, the family being about to sit down to dinner, he was invited to take his place at table as a matter of course. This invitation he accepted, and after drinking a few glasses of wine he rose up, and proposed to withdraw. On being pressed to stay, he mentioned, for the first time, his engagement with his fellow-traveller; and, his noble host offering to send a servant to conduct Mr. Nicol to the castle, Burns insisted on undertaking that office himself: he was, however, accompanied by a gentleman, a particular acquaintance of the Duke, by whom the invitation was delivered in all the forms of politeness." They found Nicol in a foaming passion: in vain the Poet soothed, explained, expostulated; he refused all apology, and kept striding up and down the streets of Fochabers, cursing the postillions for not yoking the horses and hurrying him away. Burns, it is said, eyed the irascible

pedagogue for a moment, as if deciding whether he should confront him with fury equal to his own, or quietly seat himself in his own nook of the chaise and proceed southward. He chose the latter alternative, and turned his back on Castle-Gordon with a vexation he sought not to conceal.

[" This incident," Lockhart justly remarks, " may serve to suggest some of the annoyances to which persons moving, like our poet, on the debateable land between two different ranks of society, must ever be subjected. To play the lion under such circumstances must be difficult at best; but a delicate business, indeed, when the jackalls are presumptuous. This pedant could not stomach the superior success of his friend—and yet, alas for poor human nature! he certainly was one of the most enthusiastic of his admirers, and one of the most affectionate of all his intimates." " The abridgment of Burns's visit to Gordon Castle was not only," says Walker, " a mortifying disappointment, but in all probability a serious misfortune; as a longer stay among persons of such influence might have begot a permanent intimacy, and on their parts an active concern for his future advancement." " I shall certainly," says the Poet, in a letter to Mr James Hoy, Gordon Castle, " among my legacies, leave my latest curse on that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon. May that obstinate son of Latin prose (Nicol) be curst to Scotch mile periods, and damned to seven league paragraphs; while Declension and Conjugation, Gender, Number, and Time, under the ragged banners of Dissonance and Disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array!"]

The rough temper of his companion did not, however, prevent him from soliciting the muse for a song in honour of The Gordon; but the muse seems to have been infected with the mood of Nicol; she spoke, but not happily. He says in his journal—" Cross Spey to Fochabers; fine palace, worthy of the generous proprietor. The Duke makes me happier than ever great man did—noble, princely, yet mild, condescending, and affable; gay and kind: the Duchess witty and sensible—God bless them!"

The visit of Burns to Castle-Gordon was not altogether one of curiosity or chance. The Duchess desired to befriend the Poet; she spoke of his merits in the north, and praised his poems in the south, in coteries where their language was dark and mystical. Her friend, Henry Addington, now Viscount Sidmouth, saw in the verses of the rustic bard a spontaneous vigour of expression, and a glowing richness of language, all but rivalling Shakspeare. He talked of them among the titled and enthusiastic, and took pleasure in quoting them to Pitt and to Melville. This was not unknown to the Duchess: she invited him to Castle-Gordon, and promised him the company of Burns and Beattie. The future premier was unable to accept the invitation; but wrote and forwarded, it is said, these memorable lines—memorable as the first indication of that deep love which England now entertains for the genius of Burns:—

" Yes! pride of Scotia's favoured plains, 'tis thine
The warmest feelings of the heart to move;
To bid it throb with sympathy divine,
To glow with friendship, or to melt with love.

" What though each morning sees thee rise to toil;
Tho' Plenty on thy cot no blessing showers,
Yet Independence cheers thee with her smile,
And Fancy strews thy moorland with her flowers.

" And dost thou blame the impartial will of Heaven,
Untaught of life the good and ill to scan?
To thee the Muse's choicest wreath is given;
To thee the genuine dignity of man:
Then, to the want of worldly gear resign'd,
Be grateful for the wealth of thy exhaustless mind."

Aberdeen the Poet calls a lazy town, contrary to the general opinion of Scotland. Here he met with " Mr. Chalmers, printer, a facetious fellow—Mr. Ross, a fine fellow, like Professor Tytler—Mr. Marshall, one of the *poetæ minores*—Mr. Sheriffs, author of Jamie and Bess, a little decrepid body with some abilities—Bishop Skinner, a Nonjuror, son of the author of Tullochgorum:—a man," he says, " whose mild venerable manner is the most marked of any in so young a man. Professor Gordon, a good-natured, jolly-looking professor. Near Stonehive, the coast a good deal romantic—meet my relations. James Burness, writer in Stonehive, one of those who love fun, a gill, and a punning joke, and have not a bad heart; his wife, sweet and hospitable, without any affectation of what is called town-breeding." The next day he breakfasted with Mr. Burness, and slept at Lawrence Kirk. Visits the Album library. Mrs. ——— a jolly, frank, sensible, love-inspiring widow. Howe of the Mearns, a rich, cultivated, but still uninclosed country. After visiting Montrose—that finely situated handsome town, he now directed his steps to Muthie, and inspected the famous caverns on its wild romantic coast; he stopped for an hour to examine Arbroath Abbey; passed through Dundee—" a low-lying but pleasant town,"—and, having examined Broughty Castle, a finely situated ruin, on the banks of the Tay, he went " through the rich harvests and fine hedge-rows of the Carse of Gowrie; along the romantic margin of the Grampian Hills to the fruitful, woody, hilly country which encloses Perth." In going up Strathern he visited the banks of Endermay, fine, fruitful, cultivated Strath, famous in song; then mused awhile on the scene made memorable by the affecting story of " Bessy Bell and Mary Gray;" and, finally, after visiting the fine scenery on the banks of the May, and enjoying

the hospitalities of Mrs. Belcher, whom he describes as "gawcie, frank, affable, fond of rural sports, hunting, &c.," he hurried on to Queensferry, "through a cold, barren country." He parted with the north in a better mood in his last than in his first journey; he had been everywhere, save at Arbruchil, kindly received; chief had vied with chief in doing him honour, and, though he took but some twenty and odd days to this extensive tour, he had seen, observed, and imbibed so much of the mountain spirit as coloured many of his future lyrics. He took farewell of the north in character. On passing the Lowland line he turned about and exclaimed:—

"When death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A day that surely shall come,
In Heaven itself I'll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome."

[He arrived once more in Edinburgh on the 16th of September, having travelled near six hundred miles, windings included, in twenty-two days—greatly extended his acquaintance with his own country, and visited some of its most classical scenery—observed something of Highland manners, which must have been as interesting as they were novel to him—and strengthened considerably, among the sturdy Jacobites of the North, those political opinions which he at this period avowed.]

The Poet once more visited his family at Mauchline, where he remained a week or two with his mother, and having looked leisurely over the farms which still awaited his offer on Dalswinton estate, Burns proceeded to Edinburgh for the purpose of arranging his affairs with Creech, a sharp and yet dilatory person. He entertained a hope, too, that some of the leading men of Scotland would find him a task less alien to his feelings than farming, which in those days yielded but a bare subsistence; and as he had been acceptable to them before, he expected to be no less so now, when the world had sanctioned their praise. His bookseller had distant correspondents to consult, and the proceeds of a large edition to calculate; and this was the work of time. The patronage, too, which the Poet anticipated, required leisure; the great must not be pressed with eager solicitude by the poor and the dependant; their deeds of generosity must be allowed to come in their own time and season, and seem the offspring of their own natures.

[It was at this period that his friend Mr. Ainslie says, "The Poet was a considerable time in Edinburgh, visiting Mr. Cruikshanks, then one of the masters of the High School, who lived in St. James's Square, New Town. I had then a small bachelor house on the north side of the square, and, intimate as we were, it may be supposed we spent many an hour together; and, to me, most agreeable they were. I remember one pleasant summer afternoon, the Poet came over to me after dinner. I was then but a writer to the signet's apprentice, but had already a cellar, though it must be admitted it was no extensive one, for it was no more than a window bunker, and consisted but of five bottles of port—all that remained of a dozen which had been my last laid-in store; but it was excellent, and old, and got from a wine-merchant who favoured me. I was too hospitable not to offer a bottle to my friend, who was one of the finest fellows in the world. What then was to have been expected to happen?—that some nice points would have been discussed—an exercise in which the Poet displayed always great eloquence—and many a fine quotation made, in which he constantly indulged with great fervour; and, lastly, that the poor five bottles of wine might have suffered in the cause, to the great elucidation of all the questions, and the increase of the beauty and sublimity of all the passages quoted. But no such thing. 'No, my friend,' said Burns; giving me at the same time, a kindly slap upon the shoulder, 'we'll hae nae wine the day; to sit dozing in the house on sic a glorious afternoon as this! Besides, ye ken you and I dinna require wine to sharpen our wit, nor its adventitious aid to make us happy. No; we'll tak a walk about Arthur Seat, and come in to a late tea.' We did so; and I almost never found the Poet so amusing, so instructive, and altogether so delightful, as he was in the charming stroll which we had together, and during the sober 'tea drinking' which followed it.]

The active spirit of Burns could not be idle; he addressed himself to the two-fold business of love and verse. I have related the success of his poetic homage to Charlotte Hamilton.

In another letter dated November 21st 1787, to the same young lady, he says that he has a heart for friendship, if not for love, and deserves the tender sympathy of the two blooming spinsters. "Charlotte and you are just two favourite resting-places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny, wilderness of this world. God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle; I glory in being a poet, and want to be thought a wise man; I would fondly be generous, and I desire to be rich. After all, I am afraid, I am a lost subject. Some folk hae a hantle o' fauts, an' I'm but a ne'er-do-weel."

As the correspondence proceeded, Burns was overset in a hackney coach, and one of his legs dangerously bruised. He thinks of Harvieston and the condolence of beauty. "Here I am," he says, "under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion, and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest, evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have

formed a quadruple alliance to guarantee the other. I have taken, tooth and nail, to the Bible; it is really a glorious book. I would give my best song to my worst foe, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit." Charlotte Hamilton, to whose ear and heart most of these fine things were obliquely addressed, was not to be moved by the muse; she was probably aware of the more than equivocal situation in which the Poet stood with regard to Jean Armour, and she felt a growing regard for Adair, whom Burns had introduced. This, in some measure, accounts for the indifferent success of the Poet, in a matter on which he seems to have set his heart, and also for the destruction of his letters

On the 19th of the following month we find the Poet again addressing Miss Margaret Chalmers, who was married in the ensuing year to a gentleman named Hay, and who we understand still lives (1840) at Pall, in the Pyrennean district of Berne:—"The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday, I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good to see my Bardship, not in my *poetic*, but in my *vaken*, stilts, throwing my best leg with an air! and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance as a may-frog leaping across the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long expected shower. I can't say I am altogether at my ease, when I see anywhere in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, Poverty, attended, as he always is, by iron-fisted Oppression and peering Contempt. But I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day, and still my motto is, I DARE! my worst enemy is *moi-même*. There are just two creatures that I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear."*

["It seems impossible to doubt," says Lockhart, "that Burns had, in fact, lingered in Edinburgh, in the hope that, to use a vague but sufficiently expressive phrase, something would be done for him. He visited and revisited a farm,—talked and wrote scholarly and wisely about 'having a fortune at the plough-tail,' and so forth; but all the while nourished, and assuredly it would have been most strange if he had not, the fond dream that the admiration of his country would e'er long present itself in some solid and tangible shape. His illness and confinement gave him leisure to concentrate his imagination on the darker side of his prospects; and the letters which we have quoted may teach those who envy the powers and the fame of genius to pause for a moment over the annals of literature, and think what superior capabilities of misery have been, in the great majority of cases, interwoven with the possession of those very talents from which all but their possessors derive unmingled gratification."]

In December 30, 1787, Burns thus addresses his friend Richard Brown, mariner:—"I am just the same will-o'-wisp being I used to be: about the first and fourth quarters of the moon, I generally set in for the trade-wind of wisdom; but about the full and the change I am the luckless victim of mad tornadoes which blow me into chaos. All mighty love still reigns and revels in my bosom, and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow,† who has wit and wisdom more murderously fatal than the assassinating stiletto of the Sicilian banditti, or the poisoned arrow of the savage African. My Highland dirk, that used to hang beside my crutches, I have gravely removed into a neighbouring closet, the key of which I cannot command in case of spring-tide paroxysms. You may guess of her wit by the verses which she sent me the other day:—

"Talk not of love; it gives me pain:
For love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain,
And plunged me deep in woe!

"But friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was formed to prove,—
There welcome, win, and wear the prize
But never talk of love!

"Your friendship much can make me blest—
O why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the odious one request
You know I must deny!"

This Edinburgh beauty was the Mrs. Mac of the Poet's toasts when the wine circulated—the accomplished Clarinda, to whom, under the name of Sylvander, he addressed so much prose and verse. This "mistress of the Poet's soul and queen of poetesses," could not be otherwise than tolerant in her taste, if she sympathized in the affected strains which he offered at the altar of her beauty. His prose is cumbrous, and his verse laboured: there are, it is true, passages of natural feeling and sentiments sometimes of a high order, but in general his raptures are ar-

* The eloquent hypochondriacism of the concluding passage of his letter called forth the commendation of Francis Jeffry, now a Lord of Session in Scotland.

[† It is remarkable that Burns himself in the above letter, and some of his biographers, allude to Clarinda as being a *widow*, notwithstanding her husband was then living abroad. The Poet says in one of his letters to her,—"Your person is unapproachable by the laws of your country; and he loves you not as I do who would make you miserable." And again, he alludes emphatically to a *circumstance*, the occurrence of which would no longer separate them. The matrimonial connexion of this lady had proved, from no fault on her part, unhappy, and she then resided in Edinburgh, with two young children, while her husband was pushing his fortune in Jamaica, where he ultimately became chief clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, and died in 1812.—CHAMBERS.]

tificial and his sensibility assumed. He puts himself into strange postures and picturesque positions, and feels imaginary pains to correspond; he wounds himself, to shew how readily the sores of love can be mended; and flogs his body like a devotee, to obtain the compassion of his patron saint. Nor is this all; in his addresses he is often audaciously bold; he wants tenderness, too, and sometimes taste:—

"In vain would Prudence with her decent sneer,
Point to a censuring world, and bid me fear:
Above that world on wings of love I rise,
I know its worst, and can that worst despise.
Wrong'd, slander'd, shunn'd, unpitied, unredrest,
The mock'd quotation of the scorner's jest,
Let Prudence' direst bodements on me fall—
Clarinda, rich reward! o'erpays them all!"

These lines are sufficiently forward, and could not but be painful to Mrs. M'Lehose, unless she smiled on them as the fantastic effusions of a pastoral platonism. In another part of the same poem he vows,

"By all on high adoring mortals know!
By all the conscious villain fears below!
By your dear self! the last great oath, I swear,
Not life nor soul were ever half so dear,"

to love her while wood grows and water runs, according to the tenure of entailed property.

It is some apology for the Poet, perhaps, that these compositions, which I am unwilling to regard as serious—and which formed, in the opinion of James Grahame, the poet, "a romance of real platonic attachment"—were produced in the painful leisure which a bruised limb afforded him; the lady to whom they were addressed now and then wrote to the crippled Bard, and diverted him with her wit, though she refused to soothe him with her presence. It is true that the poem from which these lines are extracted contains couplets presumptuous and familiar, and asserts that they were commended by his fair correspondent; but this cannot well be believed by those who draw conclusions from the general spirit of the letters. Those who know Clarinda cannot but feel that Burns thought of her when he said, "People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity which fires at being trifled with or lowered, or even too closely approached."

Yet cheered as he was by beauty, and praised as a poet from "Maidenkirk to John o' Groats," the poet was anything but happy. "I have a hundred times wished," he says in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, of the 21st of January, 1788, "that one could resign life as an officer resigns his commission; for I would not take in any poor ignorant wretch by selling out. Lately I was a sixpenny private, and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign a starving cadet, a little more conspicuously wretched. I am ashamed of all this; for, though I do not want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning, as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice."

During the abode of Burns in Edinburgh, Johnson commenced his "Musical Museum," the object of which was to unite the songs and the music of Scotland in one general collection. The proprietor, a man of more enthusiasm than knowledge, inserted in his first volume, published in June, 1787, several airs of at least doubtful origin, and several songs of more than doubtful merit: before he commenced the second volume, he had acquired the help of Burns; indeed, the first bears marks of his hand. "Green grow the Rashes" is an acknowledged production, and "Bonnie Dundee" carries the peculiar impress of his genius:—

"My blessings upon thy sweet wee lippie;
My blessings upon thy bonnie e'e bree!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou's ay be dearer and dearer to me!"

To the second volume, published in February, 1788, Burns contributed the preface, and no less than thirty lyrics. In the former he says, "The songs contained in this volume, both music and poetry, are all of them the work of Scotchmen. Wherever the old words could be recovered, they have been preferred; both as generally suiting better the genius of the tunes, and to preserve the productions of those earlier sons of the Scottish muses. Ignorance and prejudice may, perhaps, affect to sneer at the simplicity of the poetry or music of some of these pieces; but their having been for ages the favourites of nature's judges, the common people, was to the editor a sufficient test of their merit.

Most of the songs which Burns contributed are of great merit. "To the Weavers gin ye go" is the homely song of a country lass who went to warp a web, and forgot her errand: for—

"A bonnie westlin weaver lad
Sat working at his loom,
He took my heart as wi' a net,
In every knot and thrum."

It relates, I have heard, the story of one of his rustic sweethearts. "Whistle an' I'll come to you, my lad" is an imperfect version of one of his happiest songs. The idea is old—and some of the words. The verse which he added will ever be new:—

"Come down the back stairs when ye come to court me;
Come down the back stairs when ye come to court me;
Come down the back stairs, and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na coming to me."

He loved to eke out the old melodies of Caledonia. "I'm o'er young to marry yet" is sung by a very young lady, who upbraids her suitor with a design to carry her from her mother,

and put her into the company of a strange man during the lonely nights of winter. She, however, discovers a remedy :—

"Fu' loud and shrill the frosty wind,
Blaws thro' the leafless timmer, sir;
But if ye come this gate again,
I'll aulder be gin simmer, sir."

"The Birks of Aberfeldy" originated in an old strain called the Birks of Abergeldie, but surpasses it as far as sunshine excels candlelight. The same may be said of "Macpherson's Farewell." Something of the rudiments of this bold rant may be found in old verses of the same name; but they are, in comparison, as barley-chaff is to gold sand. The hero of the song, a musician and noted freebooter, was taken redhand, and hurried to execution. When the rope was round his neck, he sent for his favourite fiddle, played an air, called, after him, Macpherson's Rant, offered the instrument in vain to any one who could play the tune, then broke it over the hangman's head, and flung himself from the ladder. His song is in character, wild, daring, and revengeful :—

"Oh! what is death but parting breath?
On many a bloody plain
I've dared his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again.
Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword,
And there's no man in all Scotland,
But I'll brave him at a word."

The genius of the north had an influence over the Poet's musings in other compositions. In "The Highland Lassie," the lover complains of want of wealth, and the faithlessness of fortune, but, strong in affection, declares,

"For her I'll dare the billows' roar,
For her I'll trace the distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O."

In "The Northern Lass" he utters similar sentiments: and in "Braw, braw lads of Galla Water," his hand may be traced by the curious in Scottish song; it is too kenspeckle to be denied :—

"Sae fair her hair, sae brent her brow,
Sae bonnie blue her een, my dearie,
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou',
The mair I kiss, she's aye my dearie."

"Stay, my Charmer," if not of Highland extraction, owes its air to the north. There are but eight lines; but he excelled in saying much in small compass :—

"By my love so ill requited:
By the faith you fondly plighted,
By the pangs of lovers slighted,
Do not, do not leave me so!"

To a jacobite feeling we owe that fine strain "Strathallan's Lament." "This air," says the Poet, "is the composition of one of the worthiest and best men living, Allan Masterton. As he and I were both sprouts of jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause." The song is supposed to be the "Goodnight" of James Drummond, Viscount of Strathallan, who escaped to France from Culloden. Even in the days of Burns, the language which the exile is made to utter could not but be unacceptable to many :—

"In the cause of right engaged,
Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly waged,
But the heavens denied success."

The amended songs are numerous. In his hastiest touches there is something always which no hand but that of Burns could communicate. "How long and dreary is the night!" is mostly his; the last verse will go to many hearts :—

"How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and wearie!
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie."

The hoary wooer in "To daunton me," is sketched with all the scornful spirit of a lady who has set her heart on a younger person :—

"He hirples twa-fold as he dow,
Wi' his teethless gab and his auld beld pow,
And the rain dreeps down frae his red-bleer'd ee,
That auld man shall never daunton me."

In "Bonnie Peggie Alison," the Poet indulges in such license of language as may startle the fastidious; yet it is but the rapture of an enthusiastic heart :—

'When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure,
I seek nae mair o' Heaven to share
Than sic a moment's pleasure."

"The Dusty Miller" exhibits a few of his happy emendations. A young woman, in remembering the attractions of a lover who wins a shilling before he spends a groat, sings with arch simplicity—

"Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss
I got frae the miller."

He withheld his name from "Theniel Menzies' bonny Mary." The buoyancy of the language, and the natural truth of the delineation must be felt by all who know what lyric composition is :—

"Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,
Her haffet locks as brown 's a berry,
And aye they dimpl'd wi' a smile,
The rosy cheeks o' bonny Mary."

"The Banks of the Devon," "Raving winds around her blowing," "Musing on the

roaring ocean," "A rose-bud by my early walk," and "Where braving angry Winter's storms," were all published in the Poet's name. In the first, he paid homage to the charms of Charlotte Hamilton; and in the latter, to the gentle and winning graces of Margaret Chalmers. These are more finished and equal, yet scarcely so happy as some of the hasty and perhaps inconsiderate snatches with which he eked out the fragmentary strains of the old minstrels.

That his heart was much with this sort of work, we may gather from his letter to Mrs. Rose of Kilravock, Feb. 17th 1788:—"I am assisting a friend in a collection of Scottish songs set to their proper tunes. Every air worth preserving is to be included. Among others, I have given 'Morag,' and some few Highland airs which pleased me most, a dress which will be more generally known, though far—far inferior in real merit." He wrote to his friends—east, west, north, and south, for airs and verses for the Museum. From his old comrade M'Candlish he begged "Pompey's Ghost," by the unfortunate Lowe—from Skinner of Linshart—from Dr. Blacklock he entreated communications; and he drew upon his own memory for some of those antique strains, picked up from the singing of his mother, or the maidens of Ayr-shire.

To those who charge Burns with idleness or dissipation during this winter in Edinburgh, many will think thirty songs an answer sufficient, without taking into consideration his maimed limb, and his numerous letters to Clarinda. He had other matters, too, on his mind; I have said that he exhibited early symptoms of jacobitism: his Highland tours and conversations with the chiefs and ladies of the north strengthened a liking which he seems to have inherited from his fathers. On the 31st of December previous, he was present at a meeting to celebrate the birth-day of the last of the race of our native princes, the unfortunate Charles Edward: he acted the part of laureate on the occasion, and recited an ode, lamenting the past, sympathizing in the present, and prophesying retribution for the future. Like almost all the verse for which Burns taxed his spirit, the ode is cumbrous and inflated; neither the fiery impetuosity of Graham, nor the calm intrepidity of Balmerino inspired him—

"Ye honoured mighty dead!
Who nobly perished in the glorious cause,
Your king, your country, and your laws:
From great Dundee, who, smiling, victory led,
And fell a martyr in her arms;
What breast of northern ice but warms
To bold Balmerino's undying name?
Whose soul of fire, lighted at Heaven's high flame,
Deserves the proudest wreath departed heroes claim!"

Who were the Poet's associates at this anniversary no one has told us. The white rose of jacobitism was worn in those days by many people of rank and condition: it was the symbol of all who regretted that Scotland had ceased to be a separate kingdom, had lost the dignity of her parliament, the honours of her monarchy, and was compelled to send her children into another land to represent her interests, where they were exposed to the scoffs and insults of a proud and haughty people. This was the jacobitism of Burns; though he sung of the woes of Drumossie, and the sufferings of Prince Charles, he had no desire to see the ancient line restored, and the Hanoverian dynasty expelled, since he knew that every step towards the throne would be on a bloody corse. His heart clung to the immediate descendants of Bruce, and it is probable that he never studied the mystery of a constitution which, to secure our freedom, raised a prince to the throne who could neither speak our language, nor comprehend the genius of the people. His whole affections were concentrated on his native land: his whole object was to do it honour: for this he sacrificed his time; to this he dedicated his genius; and on this, though poor, he laid out some of the little wealth he had. He saw with sorrow that the dust of Fergusson, the poet, lay among the ignoble dead, and desired to raise a memorial, such as might guide the steps of the lovers of Scottish song to the grave of his brother bard. This humble wish was graciously granted by the authorities of the Canongate kirk, and he raised a monumental stone, which is still to be seen among the thick-piled gravestones of the burial-ground. A communication from Delhi informs me that the price paid by the Poet was 5*l.*, and that the work was executed by Mr. Burn, father of the present distinguished architect.*

That Burns could write so many songs is to be marvelled at, when we reflect that, during most of the time, a sort of civil war existed between him and his bookseller, of which many symptoms are visible in his printed and manuscript correspondence.—"I have broke measures," he says, "with Creech, and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me, upon

[* The sum paid was £5 10, as appears from the following extract of an original letter, in Burns's hand-writing, now in the possession of Geo. H. King, Esq, of Glasgow. To Mr. Peter Hill, Bookseller, Edinburgh.—*Dumfries, February 5th*, 1792.—My dear friend, I send you by the bearer, Mr. Clark, a particular friend of mine, six pounds and a shilling, which you will dispose of as follows:—five pounds ten shillings, per account, I owe to Mr. Robert Burn, Architect, for erecting the stone over the grave of poor Fergusson. He was two years in erecting it, after I had commissioned him for it; and I have been two years in paying him, after he sent me his account; so he and I are quits. He had the *hardiesse* to ask me interest on the sum, but, considering the money was due by one poet for putting a tombstone over another, he may, with grateful surprise, thank Heaven that he ever saw a farthing of it. R. B.]

his honour, that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor, damned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions!

'I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to die.'

I have this moment got a hint—I fear I am something like undone; but I hope for the best. Come stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution; accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously, though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path; but my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on."

These expressions refer to whispers which had reached his ear about the solvency of Creech, and are contained in a letter to Margaret Chalmers: the conduct of his bookseller dwelt long on his mind; we find him, sometime afterwards, thus writing to Dr. Moore.—"I cannot boast about Creech's ingenuous dealing; he kept me hanging on about Edinburgh from the 7th of August, 1787, until the 13th of April, 1788, before he would condescend to give me a statement of affairs; nor had I got it even then, but for an angry letter I wrote him, which irritated his pride. I could not a 'tale,' but a detail, 'unfold;' but what am I that I should speak against the Lord's anointed bailie of Edinburgh! I give you this information, but I give it to yourself only, for I am still much in the gentleman's mercy. Perhaps I injure the man in the idea I am sometimes tempted to have of him—God forbid I should! A little time will try, for in a month I shall go to town to wind up the business, if possible." That Creech, after long evasion, behaved honourably and liberally to the impatient Poet is well enough known to the world; I record these complaints to vindicate the latter from the charge of having loitered needlessly in Edinburgh, and refrained from putting the ploughshare in the ground which was offered for his acceptance.

"His publisher's accounts," says Lockhart, "when they were at last made out, must have given the impatient author a very agreeable surprise; for, in his letter to Lord Glencairn, we find him expressing his hopes that the gross profits of his book might amount to 'better than £200;' whereas, on the day of settling with Mr. Creech, he found himself in possession of £500, if not of £600."*

Burns now set seriously about considering his future prospects. Having settled with Creech, he wrote to Mr. Miller that he would accept his offer with regard to the farm; he lent two hundred pounds to his brother Gilbert, to enable him to mend himself in the world and support his mother, whom he tenderly loved; and, with five hundred pounds in his pocket, he resolved to unite himself to Jean Armour, carry her to the banks of the Nith, and follow the plough and the muses. What he had seen and endured in Edinburgh, during his second visit, admonished him regarding the reed on which he leant, when he hoped for a place of profit and honour from the aristocracy on account of his genius. On his first appearance the doors of the nobility opened spontaneous, "on golden hinges turning," and he ate spiced meats and drank rare wines, interchanging nods and smiles with "high dukes and mighty earls." A colder reception awaited his second coming; the doors of lords and ladies opened with a tardy courtesy; he was received with a cold and measured stateliness, was seldom requested to stop, seldomer to repeat his visit; and one of his companions used to relate with what indignant feeling the Poet recounted his fruitless calls and his uncordial receptions in the good town of Edinburgh. That he had high hopes is well known; there were not wanting friends to whisper that lordly, nay, royal, patronage was certain; nor were such expectations at all unreasonable,—but genius is not the passport to patronage; he was allied to no noble family, and could not come forward under the shelter of a golden wing; he was unconnected with any party which could pretend to political influence, and who had power either to retard or forward a ministerial measure; moreover, he was one of those "whim-inspired" persons of whom he sings in his inimitable "Bard's Epitaph:"—

"Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool."

His case was, therefore, next to hopeless; he asked for nothing, and nothing was offered, though men of rank and power were aware that he was unfitted with an aim in life—that poetry alone could not sustain him, and that he must go back to the flail and the furrow. He went to Edinburgh, strong in the belief that

[* Nicol, the most intimate friend of Burns, writes to Mr. John Sewars, excise-officer of Dumfries, immediately on hearing of the poet's death. "He certainly told me that he received £600 for the first Edinburgh edition, and £100 afterwards for the copyright." Dr. Currie states the gross product of Creech's edition at £500, and Burns himself, in one of his letters, at £400 only. Nicol hints that Burns had contracted debts while in Edinburgh, which he might not wish to avow on all occasions; and if we are to believe this, which is probable, and that the expense of printing the subscription edition should, moreover, be deducted from the £700 stated by Nicol, the apparent contradictions in these statements may be pretty nearly reconciled. There appears to be reason for thinking that Creech subsequently paid more than £100 for the copyright. If he did not, how came Burns to realise, as Currie states, "nearly nine hundred pounds in all by his poems?" LOCKHART.]

genius such as his would raise him in society; but he came not back without a sourness of spirit and a bitterness of feeling.

The pride of Burns, which was great, would not allow him to complain, and his ambition, which was still greater, hindered him from regarding his condition as yet hopeless. When he complained at all, he did not make his moan to man; his letters to his companions or his friends are sometimes stern, fierce, and full of defiance; he uttered his lament in the ear of woman, and seemed to be soothed with her attention and her sympathy.—"When I must escape into a corner," he says bitterly to Mrs. Dunlop, "lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim, What merits has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I am kicked into the world the sport of folly or the victim of pride? I have read somewhere of a monarch who was so out of humour with the Ptolomean system of astronomy that he said, had he been of the Creator's council, he could have saved him a great deal of labour and absurdity. I will not defend this blasphemous speech; but often, as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Prince's-street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective. This trifling alteration, not to mention the prodigious saving it would be in the tear and wear of the neck and limb—sinews of many of his Majesty's liege subjects, in the way of tossing the head and tip-toe strutting, would evidently turn out a vast advantage in enabling us at once to adjust the ceremonials in making a bow, or making way to a great man, and that, too, within a second of the precise spherical angle of reverence, or an inch of the particular point of respectful distance, which the important creature himself requires; as a measuring glance at his towering altitude would determine the affair like instinct." The condition of the Poet made, we fear, such bitter reflections matters of frequent occurrence. The learned authors—and Edinburgh swarmed with them—claimed rank above the inspired clod of the valley; the gentry asserted such superiority, as their natural inheritance; the nobility held their elevation by act of parliament or the grace of majesty; and none of them were prepared to accept the brotherhood of one who held the patent of his honours immediately from nature.

In the course of the winter Burns resolved, since no better might be, to unite the farmer with the poet; some one persuaded him that to both he could join the gauger. So soon as this possessed his fancy, he determined to beg the humble boon from his patrons, and, as no one seemed more likely to be kind than the Earl of Glencairn, he addressed him anxiously:—"I have weighed—long and seriously weighed—my situation. I wish to get into the excise: I am told your lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as the cold denial." What the earl did in this matter is unknown; his conduct seems to have satisfied Burns, for at his death, which soon followed, he poured out a poetic lament full of the most touching sensibility.

The Excise commission came in an unlooked-for way. While Burns was laid up with his crushed limb, he was attended by Alexander Wood, surgeon, a gentleman still affectionately remembered as "kind old Sandy Wood:" to him the Poet had mentioned his desire to obtain a situation in the Excise. Wood went to work, and so bestirred himself that Graham of Fintray put his name on the roll of Excisemen at once. The Poet, who, like the hero of his own inimitable song, was

"Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,"

communicated this stroke of what he called good fortune to Margaret Chalmers in these words:—"I have entered into the Excise. I go to the west for about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks' instructions."

[The following is the letter of instructions given, by the Board of Excise, to the worthy individual under whom Burns was trained for the duties of his new office:—

"*Mr. James Findlay, Officer, Tarbolton.*

"The Commissioners order, That you instruct the Bearer, Mr. Robert Burns, in the Art of Gauging, and practical Dry gauging Casks and Utensils; and that you fit him for surveying Victuallers, Rectifiers, Chandlers, Tanners, Tawers, Maltsters, &c.; and when he has kept books regularly for Six Weeks at least, and drawn true Vouchers, and Abstracts therefrom, (which Books, Vouchers, and Abstracts must be signed by your Supervisor and yourself, as well as the said Mr. Robert Burns,) and sent to the Commissioners at his expense; and when he is furnished with proper instruments, and well instructed and qualified for an Officer, then (and not before, at your perils) you and your Supervisor are to certify the same to the Board, ex-

pressing particularly therein the date of this letter; and that the above Mr. Robert Burns hath cleared his Quarters, both for Lodging and Diet; that he has actually paid each of you for his Instructions and Examination; and that he has sufficient at the Time to purchase a Horse for his Business.

I am, your humble Servant,

"A. Pearson."

"Excise Office,
"Edinburgh, 31st March, 1788."]

"I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of fortune's palace shall we enter in, but what doors does she open for us. I was not likely to get anything to do. I got this without hanging-on or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate bread, and, though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life."

Nor did he withhold the tidings of his appointment from Mrs. Dunlop:—"I thought thirty-five pounds a year no bad *dernier resort* for a poor poet, if Fortune, in her jade tricks, should kick him down from the little eminence to which she has lately helped him up." Gauger is a word of mean sound, nor is the calling a popular one; yet the situation is neither so humble, nor the emoluments so trifling, as some of the Poet's southern admirers have supposed. A gauger's income in those days, on the banks of Nith; was equal to three hundred a year at present in London; an excise officer is the companion of gentlemen; he is usually a well-informed person, and altogether fifty per cent. above the ordinary excise officers on the banks of the Thames. It is true that Burns sometimes speaks with levity of his situation, but that is no proof of his contempt for it; he loved in verse to hover between jest and earnest; and, if he thought peevishly about it at all, it was in comparison of a place such as his genius merited. Having secured the excise appointment, and, on the 13th of March, 1788, bargained with Mr. Miller of Dalswinton for the farm of Ellisland, in Nithsdale, he resolved to bid Edinburgh farewell.

The Poet, it is said, visited the graves of Ramsay and Fergusson, then took leave of some friends—the Earl of Glencairn was one—by letter, and waited upon others: among the latter were Blair, Stewart, Tytler, Mackenzie, and Blacklock. I have heard that his reception was not so cordial as formerly; it would seem that his free way of speaking and free way of living had touched them somewhat. That Burns wrote joyous letters, uttered unguarded speeches when the wine-cup went round, and was now and then to be found in the company of writers' clerks, country lairds, and west country farmers, is very true, and could not well be otherwise. He was educated in a less courtly school than professors and divines: mechanics and farmers had been his associates from his cradle. The language of a farmer's fire-side is less polished and more natural than that of the college; he spoke the language of a different class of people, and he kept their company because he was one of them. Genius had ranked him with the highest; but it was the pleasure of fortune or his country to keep him at the plough. The man who got his education in the furrowed field—whose eloquence sprung from the barn and the forge,

"When ploughmen gather with their graith,"

and who wrote not classic verse, but "hamely western jingle," could not by any possibility please, by his conversation or his way of life, the polished, the polite, and the fastidious. That Burns appeared fierce and rude in their eyes is as true as that they seemed to him "white curd of asses' milk,"—learnedly dull and hypocritically courteous.

It was not unknown to the literati, and the lords of Edinburgh, that Burns kept a memorandum-book, in which he not only noted down his Border and his Highland tours, but introduced full length portraits of all the eminent persons whom he chanced to meet or with whom he associated.

"As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh," he says, "a great many characters which are new to one bred up in the shades of life as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes, in a letter to Mr. Palgrave, 'half a word fixed upon or near the spot is worth a cart-load of recollection.' I don't know how it is with the world in general; but with me, making my remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure: I want some one to laugh with me; some one to be grave with me; some one to please me, and help my discrimination, with his or her own remark, and, at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration. The world are so busied with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest, or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them, except where that observation is a sucker or branch of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, notwithstanding all the sentimental flights of novel writers, and the sage philosophy of moralists, whether we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repenting his confidence.

"For these reasons, I am determined to make these pages my confidant. I will sketch every character, that any way strikes me, to the best

of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes and take down remarks in the old law-phrase, without feud or favour. Where I hit on any thing clever, my own applause will, in some measure, feast my vanity; and, begging Patroclus' and Achates' pardon, I think a lock and key a security at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever. My own private story likewise, my love adventures, my rambles; the frowns and smiles of fortune on my bardship; my poems and fragments, that must never see the light, shall be occasionally inserted."

["How perpetually," says Lockhart, "Burns was alive to the dread of being looked down upon as a man, even by those who most zealously applauded the works of his genius, might perhaps be traced through the whole sequence of his letters. When writing to *men* of high station, at least, he preserves, in every instance, the attitude of self-defence. But it is only in his own secret tables that we have the fibres of his heart laid bare, and the cancer of this jealousy is seen distinctly at its painful work."]

"There are few," continues the Poet, "of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin than the comparison how a man of genius, nay, of avowed worth, is received every where, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets. I imagine a man of abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving *honour to whom honour is due;* he meets at a great man's table a Squire Something, or a Sir Somebody; he knows the *noble* landlord, at heart, gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes beyond perhaps any one at table; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow, whose abilities would scarcely have made an *eightpenny tailor*, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice, that are withheld from the son of genius and poverty? The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect, and love him. He showed so much attention, engrossing attention, one day, to the only blockhead at table (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunderpate, and myself) that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting. God bless him; though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day! I am pleased to think I am so capable of the throes of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues."

Burns kept this formidable book so little of a secret that he allowed a visiter sometimes to take a look at his gallery of portraits, and, as he distributed light and shade with equal freedom and force, it was soon bruited abroad that the Poet had drawn stern likenesses of his chief friends and benefactors. This book is not now to be found; it was carried away from the Poet's lodgings by one of his visiters, who refused to restore it—enlisted in the artillery—sailed for Gibraltar, and died about the year 1800. From what remain, the following characters are extracted; they make us regret the loss of the rest:—

"With Dr. Blair I am more at my ease; I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare—or, still more, when he descends from his pinnacle and meets me on equal ground in conversation, my heart overflows with what is called liking. When he neglects me for the mere carcase of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, what do I care for him or his pomp either? It is not easy forming an exact judgment of any one, but, in my opinion, Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. Natural parts, like his, are frequently to be met with; his vanity is proverbially known among his acquaintance; but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing; and a critic of the first, the very first, rank, in prose; even in poetry, a bard of nature's making can alone take the *pas* of him. He has a heart not of the very finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short he is truly a worthy and most respectable character."

Other characters were sketched with still greater freedom. Here is his satiric portrait of a celebrated lawyer:—

"He clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted an' he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist
His argument he tint [lost] it;
He graped for't, he gaped for't,
He found it was awa', man;
But what his common-sense came short,
He eked it out wi' law, man."

The above portrait of the Lord Advocate is admirable for breadth and character: the following of Harry Erskine is not so happy. He was a wit, a punster, and a poet; and one of the most companionable, intelligent, and eloquent men of his time:—

"Collected Harry stood a wee,
Then open'd out his arm, man;
His lordship sat, wi' ruefu' e'e,
And ey'd the gathering storm, man:
Like wind-driv'n hail, it did assail,
Or torrents owre a linn, man;
The Bench sae wise, lift up their eyes,
Half-waken'd wi' the din, man."

The literati of Edinburgh were not displeased, it is likely, when he went away; nor were the titled part of the community without their share in this silent rejoicing; his presence was a reproach to them. "The illustrious of his native

land, from whom he looked for patronage," had proved that they had the carcase of greatness, but wanted the soul: they subscribed for his poems, and looked on their generosity as "an alms could keep a god alive." He turned his back on Edinburgh, and from that time forward scarcely counted that man his friend who spoke of titled persons in his presence. Whilst sailing on pleasure's sea in a gilded barge, with perfumed and lordly company, he was, in the midst of his enjoyment, thrown roughly overboard, and had to swim to a barren shore, or sink for ever.

Burns now turned his steps westward. In one of his desponding moods he had lately said to a correspondent, "There are just two creatures that I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe; the one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear." In the same mingled spirit of despair and pleasure he complains—"I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice and passion; and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence, and forethought, move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and, alas! frequent defeat." The thoughts of home, of a settled purpose in life, gave him a silent gladness of heart, such as he had never before known; and, to use his own words, he moved homeward with as much hilarity in his gait and countenance "as a May-frog, leaping across the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long-expected shower." He reached Mauchline towards the close of April: he was not a moment too soon; the intercourse which, in his visits to Ayr-shire, he had renewed with Jean Armour, exposed her once more to the reproaches of her family;—she might say, in the affecting words of one whose company had brought both joy and woe—

> "My father put me frae his door,
> My friends they hae disown'd me a';
> But I hae ane will take my part—
> The bonnie lad that's far awa."

On his arrival he took her by the hand, and was re-married according to the simple and effectual form of the laws of Scotland:—"Daddie Auld," and his friends of the Old-light, felt every wish to be moderate with one whose powers of derision had been already proved. He next introduced Mrs. Burns to his friends, both in person and by letter. Much of his correspondence of this period bears evidence of the peace of mind and gladness of heart which this two-fold act of love and generosity had brought to him.

To Mrs. Dunlop, he says, "Your surmise, Madam, is just; I am indeed a husband. I found a once much-loved, and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements; but I enabled her to *purchase* a shelter:—there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery. The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health, and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a penny-pay wedding. To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger: my preservative from the first is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me; my antidote against the last is my long and deep-rooted affection for her. In housewife matters—in aptness to learn and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress; and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy, and other rural business. The Muses must not be offended when I tell them the concerns of my wife and family will, in my mind, always take the *pas*; but, I assure them, their ladyships will ever come next in place. You are right that a bachelor state would have insured me more friends; but, from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number."

On the same interesting topic he writes to Margaret Chalmers:—"Shortly after my last return to Ayr-shire, I married my Jean. This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance, perhaps; but I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit; nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and kindest heart in the country. Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit, et le plus honnête homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever in her life, except the scriptures, and the Psalms of David, in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose, or verse. I must except also from this last a certain late publication of Scots poems which she has perused very devoutly; and all the ballads in the country, as she has (Oh! the partial lover, you will cry,) the finest "wood-note wild" I ever heard. I am the more particular in this lady's character as I know she will henceforth have the honour of a share in your best wishes."

These letters, and others in the same strain, have misled Walker into the belief that Burns married Jean Armour from a sentiment of duty rather than a feeling of love; no belief can be more imaginary. The unfortunate story of his affection had been told to the world both in prose and verse; he was looked upon as one deserted by the object of his regard, under circumstances alike extraordinary and painful. That he forgave her for the sad requital of his love, and her relations for their severity, and sought her hand and their alliance, required something like apology to his friends. I see nothing in these matters out of harmony with affection and love.—"That he originally loved his Jean," says the Professor, "is not to be doubted; but, on considering all the circumstances of the case, it may be presumed that, when he first proposed marriage, it was partly from a desire to repair the injury of her reputation, and that his distress, on her refusal, proceeded as much from wounded pride as from disappointed love." The best answer to this is afforded by the words of the Poet. He loved her, he never had ceased to love her; he considered her sacrifice of him as made to the pious feelings and authority of her father:—"I can have no nearer idea," he says, "of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. Never man loved, or rather adored, a woman more than I did her, and I do still love her to distraction after all." If this is not the language of ardent love, I know not what it means.

But the Professor seems desirous of proving that this change in the Poet's affections was the necessary result of being exposed to the allurements of the high-bred dames of Edinburgh. —"The three years that succeeded," he observes, "had opened to him a new scene: and the female society to which they had introduced him was of a description altogether different from any which he had formerly known." —"Between the man of rustic life," said Burns to some one after his arrival in Edinburgh, "and the polite world, I observed little difference. In the former, though unpolished by fashion, and unenlightened by science, I had found much observation and much intelligence. But a refined and accomplished woman was a being altogether new to me, and of which I had formed but a very inadequate idea." It is plain that the Poet, when he uttered these words, was close at the ear of one of those "high-exalted courteous dames," and making himself acceptable to her by flattery and by eloquence. It is also evident that the Professor's notions of love were not at all poetic. To regulate our affections according as knowledge raises woman in the scale is paying a very pretty compliment to education; but it is most unjust to nature. True love pays no regard to such distinctions. We see a form—we see a face, which awaken emotions within us never before felt. The form is not perhaps the most perfect, nor the face the most fair, in the land; yet we persist in admiring—in loving them:—in short, we have found out, by the free-masonry of feeling, the help-mate which Heaven designed for us, and we woo and win our object.

But in what were the ladies of the polished circles of the land superior to a well-favoured, well-formed, well-bred lass of low degree, who had a light foot for a dance, a melodious voice for a song, two witching eyes, with wit at will, and who believed the man who loved her to be the greatest genius in the world? These are captivating qualities to all, save those who weigh the merits of a woman in a golden balance. Nay, in the very thing on which the Professor imagines a high and polished dame to be strong, she will be found weak. The shepherd maidens and rustic lasses of Scotland feel, from their unsophisticated state of mind, the beauty of the poetry of Burns deeply and devoutly; for once that a song of his is heard in the lighted hall, it is heard fifty times on the brook-banks and in the pastoral valleys of the land.

His marriage reconciled the Poet to his wife's kindred: there was no wedding-portion. Armour was a most respectable man, but not opulent. He gave his daughter some small store of plenishing; and, exerting his skill as a mason, wrought his already eminent son-in-law a handsome punch-bowl in Inverary marble, which Burns lived to fill often, to the great pleasure both of himself and his friends. To make bridal presents is a practice of long standing in Scotland; and it is to the credit of the personal character of the Poet that he was not forgotten. Mrs. Dunlop bethought her of Ellisland, and gave a beautiful heifer:—another friend contributed a plough. The young couple, from a love of country, ordered their furniture —plain, indeed, and homely—from Morison, a wright in Mauchline: the farm servants, male and female, were hired in Ayr-shire, a matter of questionable prudence; for the mode of cultivation is different from that of the west, and the cold humid bottom of Mossgiel bears no resemblance to the warm and stony loam of Ellisland.

PART III.—ELLISLAND.

In the month of May, 1788, Burns made his appearance as a farmer in Nithsdale; his fame had flown before him, and his coming was expected. Ellisland is beautifully situated on the south side of the Nith, some six miles above Dumfries; it joins the grounds of Friars-Carse on the north-west—the estate of Isle towards the south-east—the great road from Glasgow separates it from the hills of Dunscore; while the Nith, a pure stream running

over the purest gravel, divides it from the holms and groves of Dalswinton. The farm amounts to upwards of a hundred acres, and is part holm and part croft-land; the former, a deep rich loam, bears fine tall crops of wheat; the latter, though two-thirds loam and one-third stones on a bottom of gravel, yields, when carefully cultivated, good crops, both of potatoes and corn; yet to a stranger the soil must have looked unpromising or barren; and Burns declared, after a shower had fallen on a field of new-sown and new-rolled barley, that it looked like a paved street!

Though he got possession of the farm in May, the rent did not commence till Martinmas, as the ground was uninclosed and the houses unbuilt. By the agreement, Miller granted to Burns four nineteen years' leases of Ellisland, at an annual rent for the first three years of fifty pounds, and seventy pounds for the remaining seventy-three years of the tack; the Poet undertook, for a sum not exceeding three hundred pounds, to build a complete farm onstead, consisting of dwelling-house, barn, byre, stable, and sheds, and to permit the proprietor to plant with forest trees the scaur or precipitous bank along the side of the Nith, and a belt of ground towards Friars-Carse, of not more than two acres, in order to shelter the farm from the sweep of the north-west wind. Burns was assisted in the choice of the farm, and the terms on which it was taken, by Tennant of Glenconner, one of his Ayr-shire friends: there were other farms to be let of a superior kind on the estate, and those were pointed out by my father, steward to the proprietor—a Lothian farmer of skill and experience—but the fine romantic look of Ellisland induced Burns to shut his eyes on the low-lying and fertile Foregirth; upon which my father said, "Mr. Burns, you have made a poet's—not a farmer's—choice."

I was very young when I first saw Burns. He came to see my father; and their conversation turned partly on farming, partly on poetry, in both of which my father had taste and skill. Burns had just come to Nithsdale; and I think he appeared a shade more swarthy than he does in Nasmyth's picture, and at least ten years older than he really was at the time. His face was deeply marked with thought, and the habitual expression intensely melancholy. His frame was very muscular and well proportioned, though he had a short neck, and something of a ploughman's stoop: he was strong, and proud of his strength. I saw him one evening match himself with a number of masons; and out of five-and-twenty practised hands, the most vigorous young men in the parish, there was only one that could lift the same weight as Burns.

He had a very manly face, and a very melancholy look; but on the coming of those he esteemed, his looks brightened up, and his whole face beamed with affection and genius. His voice was very musical. I once heard him read *Tam O'Shanter*.—I think I hear him now. His fine manly voice followed all the undulations of the sense, and expressed, as well as his genius had done, the pathos of humour, the horrible and the awful, of that wonderful performance. As a man feels, so will he write; and in proportion as he sympathizes with his author, so will he read him with grace and effect.

I said that Burns and my father conversed about poetry and farming. The Poet had newly taken possession of his farm of Ellisland,—the masons were busy building,—the applause of the world was with him, and a little of its money in his pocket,—in short, he had found a resting-place at last. He spoke with great delight about the excellence of his farm, and particularly about the beauty of its situation. "Yes," my father said, "the walks on the river banks are fine, and you will see from your windows some miles on the Nith; but you will also see farms of fine rich holm,* any one of which you might have had. You have made a poet's choice, rather than a farmer's."

If Burns had much of a farmer's skill, he had little of a farmer's prudence and economy. I once inquired of James Corrie, a sagacious old farmer, whose ground matched with Ellisland, the cause of the Poet's failure. "Faith," said he, "how could he miss but fail, when his servants ate the bread as fast as it was baked? I don't mean figuratively, I mean literally. Consider a little: at that time close economy was necessary to have enabled a man to clear twenty pounds a year by Ellisland. Now, Burns' own handy work was out of the question; he neither ploughed, nor sowed, nor reaped, at least like a hard-working farmer; and then he had a bevy of servants from Ayr-shire. The lasses did nothing but bake bread, and the lads sat by the fire-side, and ate it warm, with ale. Waste of time and consumption of food would soon reach to twenty pounds a year."

"The truth of the case is, that, if Robert Burns liked his farm, it was more for the beauty of its situation than for the labours which it required. He was too wayward to attend to the stated duties of a husbandman, and too impatient to wait till the ground returned in gain the cultivation he bestowed upon it. During the prosperity of his farm, my father often said that Burns conducted himself wisely, and like one anxious for his name as a man, and his fame as a poet. He went to Dunscore kirk on Sundays, though he expressed oftener than once his dislike to the stern Calvinism of that strict old divine, Mr. Kirkpatrick;—he assisted in forming a reading club, and at weddings, and house-

* *Holm* is that rich meadow-land, intervening between a stream and the general elevation of the adjoining country.

heatings, and kirns,* and other scenes of festivity, he was a welcome guest, universally liked by the young and the old.

["The situation in which Burns now found himself," says Currie, "was calculated to awaken reflection. The different steps he had of late taken were in their nature highly important, and might be said to have, in some measure, fixed his destiny. He had become a husband and a father; he had engaged in the management of a considerable farm, a difficult and laborious undertaking; in his success the happiness of his family was involved; it was time, therefore, to abandon the gaiety and dissipation of which he had been too much enamoured; to ponder seriously on the past, and to form virtuous resolutions respecting the future. That such was actually the state of his mind, the following extract from his common-place book may bear witness:—

'ELLISLAND, SUNDAY, 14TH JUNE, 1788.

'This is now the third day that I have been in this country. 'Lord, what is man!' What a bustling little bundle of passions, appetites, ideas, and fancies! And what a capricious kind of existence he has here! * * * There is indeed an elsewhere, where, as Thomson says '*virtue sole survives.*'

'Tell us, ye dead;
Will none of you in pity disclose the secret,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?
——————A little time
Will make us wise as you are, and as close.'

'I am such a coward in life, so tired of the service, that I would almost at any time, with Milton's Adam, gladly lay me in my mother's lap, and be at peace.

'But a wife and children bind me to struggle with the stream, till some sudden squall shall overset the silly vessel, or, in the listless return of years, its own craziness reduce it to a wreck. Farewell now to those giddy follies, those varnished vices, which, though half-sanctified by the bewitching levity of wit and humour, are at best but thriftless idling with the precious current of existence; nay, often poisoning the whole, that, like the plains of Jericho, *the water is naught and the ground barren*, and nothing short of a supernaturally-gifted Elisha can ever after heal the evils.

'Wedlock, the circumstance that buckles me hardest to care, if virtue and religion were to be anything with me but names, was what in a few seasons I must have resolved on, in my present situation it was absolutely necessary. Humanity, generosity, honest pride of character, justice to my own happiness for after life, so far as it could depend (which it surely will a great deal) on internal peace; all these joined their warmest suffrages, their most powerful solicitations, with a rooted attachment, to urge the step I have taken. Nor have I any reason on *her* part to repent it. I can fancy how, but have never seen where, I could have made a better choice. Come, then, let me act up to my favourite motto, that glorious passage in Young—

On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man!'

"Under the impulse of these reflections, Burns immediately engaged in rebuilding the dwelling-house on his farm, which, in the state he found it, was inadequate to the accommodation of his family. On this occasion, he himself resumed at times the occupation of a labourer, and found neither his strength nor his skill impaired. Pleased with surveying the grounds he was about to cultivate, and with the rearing of a building that should give shelter to his wife and children, and, as he fondly hoped, to his own grey hairs, sentiments of independence buoyed up his mind, pictures of domestic content and peace rose on his imagination; and a few days passed away, as he himself informs us, the most tranquil, if not the happiest, which he had ever experienced.†"]

The Poet was now a busy and a happy man. He had houses to build, and grounds to enclose:—that he might be near both, he sought shelter in a low smoky hovel on the skirts of his farm. I remember the house well: the floor was of clay, the rafters were japanned with soot: the smoke from a hearth fire streamed thickly out at door and window, while the sunshine which struggled in at those apertures produced a sort of twilight. There he was to be found by all who had curiosity or taste, with a table, books, and drawings before him; sometimes writing letters about the land, and the people, among whom he had dropt like a slung stone; sometimes giving audience to workmen who were busy at dyking or digging foundations; and not unfrequently brushing up, as Mrs. Burns was wont to say, an old song for Johnson's Musical Museum.—"The hovel which I shelter in," said the Poet to Margaret Chalmers, "is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to ex-

[* *Kirns.*—The harvest-home dances in Scotland. Such entertainments were always given by the landlords in those days; but this good old fashion is fast wearing out. It belonged to a more prudent, as well as humane, style of manners than now finds favour.

[† Burns, in his happy days at Ellisland, had scrawled on the windows, with his diamond, his own and his wife's initials, in many a fond and fanciful shape, where they still remain, interspersed with such *morceaux* as the following:—

"An honest *woman's* the noblest work of God."

Poor fellow!—His own noble spirit was at rest with itself and all the world at this time.]

pect, but I believe in time it may be a saving bargain."

If Burns had little comfort in his lodging-place, he seems to have been unfortunate in finding society to render it endurable.—"I am here," he says, on the 9th of September, "on my farm busy with my harvest; but for all that pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country, in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose they only know in graces, prayers, &c.; and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding-webs—by the ell! As for the Muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet. For my own capricious, but good-natured hussey of a muse—

'By banks of Nith I sat and wept,
When Coila I thought on;
In midst thereof I hung my harp
The willow trees upon.'

I am generally about half my time in Ayr-shire with my 'darling Jean;' and then I, at lucid intervals, throw my horny fist across my be-cobwebbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning-wheel." In the same strain—half serious and half-humourous—he thus addresses his friend Hugh Parker:—

"In this strange land, this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne'er crost the Muse's heckles,
Nor limpit in poetic shackles;
A land that prose did never view it,
Except, when drunk, he stacher't through it.
Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk,
I hear it—for in vain I leuk.—
The red peat gleams a fiery kernel,
Enhusked by a fog infernal:
Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters:
For life and spunk, like ither Christians,
I'm dwindled down to mere existence,
Nae converse but wi' Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae ken'd face but—Jenny Geddes."

Nor did his neighbours gain on him by a closer acquaintance. "I was yesterday," he writes to Mrs. Dunlop, "at Mr. Miller's, to dinner for the first time. My reception was quite to my mind—from the lady of the house quite flattering. She sometimes hits on a couplet or two, impromptu. She repeated one or two to the admiration of all present: my suffrage, as a professional man, was expected; I for once went agonizing over the belly of my conscience. Pardon me, ye, my adored household gods, independence of spirit and integrity of soul! In the course of the conversation, Johnson's Musical Museum, a collection of Scottish songs, with the music, was talked of. We got a song on the harpsichord, beginning:—

'Raving winds around her blowing.'

The air was much admired: the lady of the house asked me whose were the words—'Mine, madam; they are, indeed, my very best verses' She took not the smallest notice of them! The old Scottish proverb says well—'King's chaff is better than other folk's corn.' I was going to make a New Testament quotation about 'casting pearls;' but that would be too virulent, for the lady is actually a woman of sense and taste."

The sooty shealing in which the Poet found refuge seems to have infected his whole atmosphere of thought; the Maxwells, the Kirkpatricks, and Dalzells were fit companions for any man in Scotland in point of courtesy and information, and they were almost his neighbours; Riddell, of Friars-Carse, an accomplished antiquarian, lived next door; and Jean Lindsay, and her husband Patrick Miller, were no ordinary people. The former was beautiful and accomplished; wrote easy and graceful verses, and had a natural dignity in her manners which became her station; the latter was one of the most remarkable men of his time; an improver and inventor, and the first who applied steam to the purposes of navigation. Burns was resolved to be discontented—at least on paper—for in his conversation he exhibited no symptoms of the kind; but talked, laughed, jested, and visited, with the ease and air of a man happy and full of hope.

The walls of the Poet's onstead began now to be visible from the North side of the Nith, and the rising structures were visited by all who were desirous of seeing how he wished to house himself. The plans were simple: the barn seemed too small for the extent of the farm, and the house for the accommodation of a large family. It contained an ample kitchen, which was to serve for dining room; a room to hold two beds, a closet to hold one, and a garret, coom-ceiled, to contain others for the female servants. One of the windows looked down the holms, another opened on the river, and the house stood so nigh the lofty bank that its afternoon shadow fell across the stream upon the opposite fields. The garden was a little way from the house; a pretty footpath led southward along the river side; another ran northward, affording fine views of the Nith, and of the groves of Friars-Carse and Dalswinton; while, half way down the steep declivity, a fine, clear, cool spring supplied water to the household. The situation was picturesque, and at the same time convenient for the purposes of the farm.

During the progress of the work, Burns was often to be found walking among the men, urging them on, and eyeing with an anxious look the tedious process of uniting lime and stone. On laying the foundation he took off his hat, and asked a blessing on the home

which was to shelter his household gods. I inquired of the man who told me this, if Burns did not put forth his hand and help him in the progress of the work?—"Ay, that he did mony a time. If he saw us like to be beat wi' a big stane he would cry, 'bide a wee!' and come rinning. We soon found out when he put to his hand—he beat a' I ever met for a dour lift." When the walls rose as high as the window-heads, he sent a note into Dumfries ordering wood for the interior lintels. Twenty carpenters flocked round the messenger, all eager to look at the Poet's hand-writing. In such touches the admiration of the country is well expressed.

These days have been numbered by Currie among the golden days of Burns. Few of his days were golden, and most of them were full of trouble; but his period of truest happiness seems to have been that which preceded and followed the first Edinburgh edition of his poems. Those were, it is true, days of feverish enjoyment; but the tide of his fortune, or at least of his hopes, was at the full. The way before him was all sunshine; and, as his ambition was equal to his genius, he indulged in splendid visions of fame and glory. The neglect of the Scottish nobles rebuked his spirit; he came to Dumfries-shire a saddened and dissatisfied man; he saw that his bread must be gained by the sweat of his brow; that the original curse, from which men without a moiety of his intellect were relieved, had fallen heavy upon him; and that he must plod labour's dull weary round, like an ox in a threshing-mill. The happiness present to his fancy now, was less bright and ethereal than before; he had to hope for heavy crops, rising markets, and fortunate bargains. At a harvest-home or penny-wedding he might expect to have his health drunk, and hear one of his songs sung; but this was not enough to satisfy ambition such as his. Among the rising walls of his onstead, he

> "Cheep'd like some bewilder'd chicken,
> Scar'd frae its minnie and the cleckin
> By hoodie craw."

and complained to Mrs. Dunlop of the uncouth cares and novel plans which hourly insulted his awkward ignorance. These uncouth cares were the labours of a farm, and the novel plans were the intricate and laborious elegancies of a plain onstead!

I have heard my father allege that Burns looked like a man restless and of unsettled purpose.—"He was ever on the move," said he, "on foot or on horseback. In the course of a single day he might be seen holding the plough, angling in the river, sauntering, with his hands behind his back, on the banks, looking at the running water, of which he was very fond, walking round his buildings, or over his fields; and, if you lost sight of him for an hour, perhaps you might see him returning from Friars-Carse, or spurring his horse through the Nith to spend an evening in some distant place, with such friends as chance threw in his way." The account which he gave of himself is much to the same purpose.—"There is," said he, "a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care, which makes the dreary objects seem larger than life. Extreme sensibility, irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side, by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence, when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind."

He loved to complain:—"My increasing cares," he says, "in this as yet strange country—gloomy conjectures in the dark vista of futurity—consciousness of my own inability for the struggle of the world—my broadened mark to misfortune in a wife and children—I could indulge these reflections, till my humour should ferment in the most acid chagrin, that would corrode the very thread of life." These are the sentiments of one resolved not to be comforted.—"The heart of the man and the fancy of the poet are the two grand considerations," he observed, "for which I live. If miry ridges and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my immortal soul, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once, and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods, and picking up grubs, not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards—creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time." To Margaret Chalmers he writes in a mood a shade or so brighter:—

"ELLISLAND, SEPTEMBER, 14TH, 1788.

"I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and, as you and your sister once did me the honour of interesting yourselves much *à l'egard de moi*, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest of human kind—unfortunate even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days than I can do with almost anybody I meet with in eight years; when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child. If ever you honoured me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more desert. I am secure against that crushing grasp of iron poverty, which, alas! is less or more fatal to the native worth and purity of, I fear, the noblest souls; and a late important step in my life has kindly taken me out of the way of those ungrateful iniquities which, however overlooked in fashionable license, or varnished in fashion-

able phrase, are indeed but lighter and deeper shades of VILLANY." After this we are scarcely prepared for his saying, "you will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle eclât, and bind every day after my reapers."

The domestic sketch of one great master has been completed by the hand of another: Sir Egerton Brydges thus relates an interview which he had with Burns on the banks of the Nith:—"I had always been a great admirer of his genius and of many traits in his character; and I was aware that he was a person moody and somewhat difficult to deal with. I was resolved to keep in full consideration the irritability of his position in society. About a mile from his residence, on a bench, under a tree, I passed a figure, which from the engraved portraits of him I did not doubt was the Poet; but I did not venture to address him. On arriving at his humble cottage, Mrs. Burns opened the door; she was the plain sort of humble woman she has been described; she ushered me into a neat apartment, and said that she would send for Burns, who was gone for a walk. In about half an hour he came, and my conjecture proved right: he was the person I had seen on the bench by the road-side. At first I was not entirely pleased with his countenance. I thought it had a sort of capricious jealousy, as if he was half inclined to treat me as an intruder. I resolved to bear it, and try if I could humour him. I let him choose his turn of conversation, but said a few words about the friend whose letter I had brought to him. It was now about four in the afternoon of an autumn day. While we were talking, Mrs. Burns, as if accustomed to entertain visiters in this way, brought in a bottle of Scotch whiskey, and set the table. I accepted this hospitality. I could not help observing the curious glance with which he watched me at the entrance of this signal of homely entertainment. He was satisfied; he filled our glasses. "Here's a health to auld Caledonia!" The fire sparkled in his eye, and mine sympathetically met his. He shook my hand with warmth, and we were friends at once. Then he drank "Erin for ever!" and the tear of delight burst from his eye. The fountain of his mind and his heart now opened at once, and flowed with abundant force almost till midnight. He had amazing acuteness of intellect, as well as glow of sentiment. I do not deny that he said some absurd things, and many coarse ones, and that his knowledge was very irregular, and sometimes too presumptuous, and that he did not endure contradiction with sufficient patience. His pride, and perhaps his vanity, was even morbid. I carefully avoided topics in which he could not take an active part. Of literary gossip he knew nothing, and therefore I kept aloof from it; in the technical parts of literature his opinions were crude and uninformed: but whenever he spoke of a great writer whom he had read, his taste was generally sound. To a few minor writers he gave more credit than they deserved. His great beauty was his manly strength, and his energy and elevation of thought and feeling. He had always a full mind, and all flowed from a genuine spring. I never conversed with a man who appeared to be more warmly impressed with the beauties of nature; and visions of female beauty and tenderness seemed to transport him. He did not merely appear to be a poet at casual intervals; but at every moment a poetical enthusiasm seemed to beat in his veins, and he lived all his days the inward, if not the outward, life of a poet. I thought I perceived in Burns's cheek the symptoms of an energy which had been pushed too far; and he had this feeling himself. Every now and then he spoke of the grave as soon about to close over him. His dark eye had at first a character of sternness; but as he became warmed, though this did not entirely melt away it was mingled with changes of extreme softness."

Between the farm of Ellisland and the village of Mauchline lies a dreary road, forty-six miles long: and along this not very romantic path Burns was in the habit of riding more frequently than was for the advantage of his pocket or his farm. It is true that it was Mrs. Burns who made him look to the west, and it is also true that a man should love and honour his wife; but it seems not to have occurred to the Poet that strict economy—a vigilant look-out upon his farming operations—was the most substantial way of paying respect to her. His jaunts were frequent; he tarried long, and there were pleasant lingerings by the way—brought about by inclination sometimes, and sometimes by wind and rain. All this was much to be regretted, and it arose mainly from want of a residence for Mrs. Burns and his children near the farm which he superintended. He complains to Ainslie of want of time. He was not one of those who could sit quietly and let matters take their course: he had all the impatience of genius, and not a little of its irritability.

In one of his excursions to Ayr-shire, he found the inn at which he usually got a night's lodging filled with mourners conveying the body of a lady of some note in the west to her family tomb; he was obliged to ride ten miles to another inn. The fruit of his vexation was an ode lavish of insult:—

"Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation, mark
Who in widowed weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years.
Note that eye—'tis rheum o'erflows—
Pity's flood there never rose:
See those hands, ne'er stretched to save;
Hands that took, but never gave."

In these words, and others bitterer still, the Poet avenged himself on the memory of a frugal and respectable lady, whose body unconsciously deprived him of a night's sleep.

Some will like better, some worse, the reproof which he gave to Kirkpatrick, the minister of Dunscore, for preaching down "the bloody and tyrannical house of Stuart." The Poet went to the Parish church to join in acknowledgements for the Revolution to which we are indebted for civil and religious rights. The stern and uncompromising divine touched the yet lingering jacobitical prejudices of Burns so sharply, that he seemed ready to start from his seat and leave the church.

On going home he wrote thus to the London Star: — "Bred and educated in revolution principles—the principles of reason and common sense—it could not be any silly prejudice which made my heart revolt at the abusive manner in which the reverend gentleman threatened the house of Stuart. We may rejoice sufficiently in our deliverance from past evils without cruelly raking up the ashes of those whose misfortune it was, perhaps, as much as their crime, to be the author of those evils. The Stuarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying; but these prerogatives were inimical to the happiness of a nation, and the rights of subjects. Whether it was owing to the wisdom of leading individuals, or to the jostling of parties, I cannot pretend to determine; but, happily for us, the kingly power was shifted into another branch of the family, who, as they owed the throne solely to the call of a free people, could claim nothing inconsistent with the covenanted terms which placed them there. Let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity feel for a family illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent; and let every Briton, and particularly every Scotchman, who ever looked with reverential pity on the dotage of a parent, cast a veil over the fatal mistakes of the kings of his forefathers."

The eloquent humanity of this appeal was thrown away, perhaps, upon an intrepid Calvinist, to whom the good things of this world were as dust in the balance compared with what he deemed his duty to God and his conscience.—"You must have heard," says Burns in a letter to Nicol, "how Lawson of Kirkmahoe, seconded by Kirkpatrick of Dunscore, and the rest of that faction, have accused, in formal process, the unfortunate Heron of Kirkgunzeon, that, in ordaining Neilson to the cure of souls in Kirkbean, he feloniously and treasonably bound him to the Confession of Faith, as far as it was agreeable to reason and the word of God." The Poet was unfortunate in his respect for those Galloway apostles: for worth and true nobleness of mind, Lawson and Kirkpatrick were as high above them as Criffel is above Solway. He was wayward, and scarcely to be trusted in his arguments on religious topics:—a Cameronian boasted to me how effectually Burns interposed between him and two members of the established kirk, who were crushing him with a charge of heresy. — "The Poet," said he, "proved the established kirk to be schismatic, and the poor broken remnant to be the true light. Never believe me if he wasna a gude man!"

A secluded walk, or a solitary ride, were to Burns what the lonely room and evening lamp are said to be to others who woo the muse. Though sharp and sarcastic in his correspondence, he was kindly and obliging in other matters. He had formed a friendship with the family of Friars-Carse, and was indulged with a key which admitted him when he pleased to the beautiful grounds—to the rare collections of antique crosses, troughs, altars, and other inscribed stones of Scotland's elder day—and to, what the Poet did not love less, a beautiful hermitage, in the centre of the grove next to Ellisland. He rewarded this indulgence by writing an inscription. At first the poem was all contained on one pane of glass; but his fancy overflowed such limits:—

"Thou whom chance may hither lead;
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silken stole,
Grave these maxims on thy soul:—
Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour;
Fear not clouds will always lour.
* * *
Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quod the Beadsman of Nithside."

These sentiments show the colour of the Poet's mind rather than its original vigour. He was happier in a poem addressed to Graham of Fintry; it is rich in observation, and abounds with vivid pictures, some of them darkening into the stern and the sarcastic:—

"Thee, Nature! partial Nature! I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain.
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedge-hog in their robes are snug.
But, oh! thou bitter step-mother, and hard
To thy poor fenceless naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
And half an idiot, too—more helpless still;
No nerves olfactory, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich Dullness' comfortable fur,
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears the unbroken blast on every side;
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics!—appall'd I venture on the name;
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame,
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Munroes!
He hacks to teach—they mangle to expose."

The fine satire and graceful application of these lines make us regret that they were addressed to one who had nothing better in his gift than situations in the Excise.

In lyrical verse the muse of Burns was at this time somewhat sparing of her inspiration; she who loved to sing of rustic happiness in her own country tongue was put out in her musings by the sound of mason's hammers and carpenters' saws. The first of his attempts is the exquisite song called "The Chevalier's Lament;" it was partly composed on horseback, on the 30th of March previous.—"Yesterday," he says to Robert Cleghorn, "as I was riding through a track of melancholy, joyless moors, between Galloway and Ayr-shire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, 'Captain O'Keane,' coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it:—

"The small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet winds clear through the vale,
The hawthorn-tree blows in the dew of the morning,
And wild scatter'd cowslips bedeck the green dale;
But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
While the lingering moments are numbered by care?
No flowers gaily springing, nor birds sweetly singing,
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair."

He contributed some dozen songs or so this season to Johnson:—"I can easily see that you will very probably," he says, "have four volumes. Perhaps you may not find your account lucratively in this business; but you are a patriot for the music of your country, and I am certain posterity will look upon themselves as highly indebted to your public spirit. I see every day new musical publications advertised, but what are they?—gaudy butterflies of a day: but your work will outlive the momentary neglects of idle fashion, and defy the teeth of time." Of the new songs which he wrote, "Beware of bonnie Ann" was the first; Ann, the daughter of Allan Masterton, was the heroine.—"The Gardener wi' his Paidle" is another; the first verse is natural and flowing:—

"When rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck the gay green spreading bowers,
Then busy, busy are his hours,
The gardener wi' his paidle.
The chrystal waters gently fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round him blaw,
The gardener wi' his paidle."

"On a Bank of Flowers" was written by desire of Johnson, to replace a song of greater merit, but less delicacy, published by Ramsay. "The day returns, my bosom burn," was composed in compliment to the bridal-day of the laird of Friars-Carse and his lady; it is very beautiful:—

"The day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet;
Though winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er simmer sun was half sae sweet."

"At their fire-side," says the Poet, "I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together." "Go fetch to me a pint o' wine" Burns introduced to his brother Gilbert as an old song which he had found among the glens of Nithsdale, and asked if he did not think it beautiful.—"Beautiful!" said Gilbert; "it is not only that, but the most heroic of lyrics. Ah, Robert! if you would write oftener that way, your fame would be surer." He also copied it out as a work of the olden muse, to Mrs. Dunlop; the second verse is magnificent:—

"The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody:
But it's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me longer wish to tarry,
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar—
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary."

He was fond of passing off his own compositions as the labours of forgotten bards. "Auld lang syne" he spoke of to Mrs. Dunlop as a song that had often thrilled through his soul: nor did he hesitate to recommend it to Thomson as a lyric of other days which had never been in print, nor even in manuscript, till he took it down from an old woman's singing. Many a Scottish heart will respond in far lands to the following lines:—

"We twa hae run about the braes,
An' pou'd the gowans fine,
But we've wandered mony a weary foot
Since auld lang syne.
We twa hae paidlet i' the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Since auld lang syne."

The desponding spirit of the Poet is visible in the song of "The lazy Mist."—"I'll never wish to hear it sung again," said a farmer to me once; "it is enough to make one quit plough-hilts and harrow, and turn hermit." "Of a' the airts the wind can blaw" is as cheerful as the other is sorrowful.—"I composed it," said the Poet, out of compliment to Mrs. Burns:—it was," he archly adds, "during the honey-moon." This was the fruit of one of his horseback meditations, when riding to Mossgiel from Ellisland, with his rising onstead, his new-sown crop, and the charms of Jean Armour's company in his mind. He made it by the way, and sung it to his wife when he arrived. There are four verses altogether; two of them are not commonly printed, though both are beautiful:—

"O blaw ye westlin' winds, blaw saft
Amang the leafy trees,
Wi' balmy gale frae hill an' dale,
Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
That's aye sae neat an' clean;
Ae smile o' her wou'd banish care,
Sae charming is my Jean."

These verses with which Burns eked out and amended the old lyrics are worthy of notice. There is some happy patching in "Tibbie Dunbar:"—

"I care na thy daddie, his lands and his money;
I care na thy kindred sae high and sae lordly;
But say thou wilt hae me, for better for waur,
And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar."

In "The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a'," and in "Ay waukin, O," are two or three of the Burns' touches. In "My Love she's but a lassie yet" his hand is more visible:—

"My love she's but a lassie yet,
My love she's but a lassie yet;
We'll let her stand a year or twa.
She'll no be half sae saucy yet;
I rue the day I sought her, O,
I rue the day I sought her, O;
Wha gets her need na say he's wooed,
But he may say he's bought her, O."

Having cut and secured his crop, seen his stable for holding four horses, and his byre for containing ten cows, erected, and his dwelling house rendered nearly habitable, he went into Ayr-shire in the middle of November; and, in the first week of the succeeding month, returned with Mrs. Burns, and some cart-loads of plenishing to Ellisland. He was visited on this occasion by many of his neighbours: the gladsome looks and the kindly manners of his young wife made a favourable impression on all; and at his house-heating, "Luck to the roof-tree of the house of Burns!" was drunk by the men, and some of his songs sung by the lasses of Nithsdale. He was looked upon now as having struck root as a poet and a farmer, and, as both, was welcome to the people of the vale around. Yet his coming brought something like alarm to a few: the ruder part of the peasantry dreaded being pickled and preserved in sarcastic verse. An old farmer told me that, at a penny-pay wedding, when one or two wild young fellows began to quarrel and threatened to fight, Burns rose up and said, "Sit down and be damned to you! else I'll hing ye up like potatoe-bogles, in sang to-morrow."—"They ceased and sat down," said my informant, "as if their noses had been bleeding."

In the letters and verses of the Poet at this period, we can see a picture of his mind and feelings.—In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated January 1, 1789, he writes:—"This, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little of a presbyterian that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery. This day—New Year's day—the first Sunday in May; a breezy, blue-skyed noon, sometime about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been to me a kind of holiday. I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, 'The Vision of Mirza;' a piece that struck my young fancy, before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: 'On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.' We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls; so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast make no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the fox-glove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident, or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave." Thus eloquently could Burns discourse upon his own emotions; he was willing to accept, as proofs of an immortal spirit within him, the poetic stirrings of his own sensibility.

["Few, it is to be hoped," says the eloquent Lockhart, "can read such things as these without delight; none, surely, that taste the ele-

vated pleasure they are calculated to inspire can turn from them to the well-known issue of Burns's history without being afflicted. It is difficult to imagine anything more beautiful, more noble, than what such a person as Mrs. Dunlop might at this period be supposed to contemplate as the probable tenour of his future life. What fame can bring of happiness he had already tasted; he had overleaped, by the force of his genius, all the painful barriers of society; and there was probably not a man in Scotland who would not have thought himself honoured by seeing Burns under his roof. He had it in his power to place his poetical reputation on a level with the very highest names, by proceeding in the same course of study and exertion which had originally raised him into public notice. Surrounded by an affectionate family; occupied, but not engrossed, by the agricultural labours in which his youth and early manhood had delighted; communing with nature in one of the loveliest districts of his native land; and, from time to time, producing to the world some immortal addition to his verse,—thus advancing in years and in fame, with what respect would not Burns have been thought of! How venerable in the eyes of his contemporaries! How hallowed in those of after generations, would have been the roof of Ellisland, the field on which he 'bound every day after his reapers,' the solemn river by which he delighted to wander! The plain of Bannockburn would hardly have been holier ground."]

That Burns imagined he had united the poet, farmer, and exciseman, all happily in his own person, was a dream in which he indulged only during the first season that he occupied Ellisland. When he thought of his bargain with Miller, his natural engagement with the Muse, and of his increasing family, he was not unconscious that he had taxed mind and body to the uppermost: poetry was not then, more than now, a productive commodity, and he could not expect a harvest such as he had reaped in Edinburgh every year. A farm such as his required the closest, nay, most niggardly, economy to make it pay; and he was not, therefore, unwise in leaning to the Excise to help out with a little ready and certain money the deficiencies of his other speculations. As yet, however, his hopes were high, and his spirit untouched—when he said

> "Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
> Thou stalk o' carle-hemp in man:"

he was bracing himself up for the contest. Such fits of thought generally with him ushered in verse. When visions of fame and honest hard-earned independence passed before his sight, Burns slipt out to the "Scaur's red side," and pacing to and fro, indicated, to the humming of some favourite tune, that he was busy with song. Nay, it was not unusual with him to go out, "attired as minstrels wont to be," with his head uncovered—his ancestor's broad sword buckled to his side; and, traversing the river-bank in the glimpses of the moon, chant in a voice, deep, low, and melodious, the verses which rose on his fancy.

["On the Dalswinton side," says Lockhart, "the river washes lawns and groves; but over against these the bank rises into a red *scaur*, of considerable height, along the verge of which, where the bare shingle of the precipice all but but overhangs the stream, Burns had his favourite walk, and might now be seen striding alone, early and late, especially when the winds were loud, and the waters below him swollen and turbulent. For he was one of those that enjoy nature most in the more severe of her aspects; and throughout his poetry, for one allusion to the liveliness of spring, or the splendour of summer, it would be easy to point out twenty in which he records the solemn delight with which he contemplated the melancholy grandeur of autumn, or the savage gloom of winter. Indeed, I cannot but think that the result of an exact inquiry into the composition of Burns's poems, would be, that 'his vein,' like that of Milton, flowed most happily 'from the autumnal equinox to the vernal:'—Of Lord Byron, we know that his vein flowed best at midnight; and Burns has himself told us that it was his custom 'to take a gloamin' shot at the Muses.' "]

Nith side was a favourite place for study: southward lies a pretty walk among natural clover: northward the bank is rough with briar and birch, while, far below the stream, roughened by the large stones of Fluechar-Ford, may be heard—

> "Chafing against the Scaur's red side."

Here, after a fall of rain, the poet loved to walk "listening to the dashing roar," or looking at the river, chafed and agitated, bursting impetuously from the groves of Friar's-Carse against the bridling embankment which fences the low holms of Dalswinton. Thither he walked in his sterner moods, when the world and its ways touched his spirit; and the elder peasants of the vale still shew the point at which he used to pause and look on the red and agitated stream. In one of these moods he produced, "I hae a wife of my ain," a rather indecorous ditty, but full of the character of the man, and breathing of resolution and independence:—

> "I hae a wife o' my ain—I'll partake wi' naebody;
> I'll tak' cuckold frae nane, I'll gie cuckold to naebody.
> I hae a penny to spend—there, thanks to naebody;
> I hae naething to lend—I'll borrow frae naebody.
>
> "I am naebody's lord,—I'll be slave to naebody;
> I hae a gude braid sword—I'll tak' dunts frae naebody.
> I'll be merry and free—I'll be sad for naebody;
> If naebody care for me, I'll care for naebody."

Burns indulged in the wish to compose a work less desultory, and more the offspring of meditation, than those short and casual pieces which were rather the sport of his vacant hours than the result of settled study and deliberate thought. Something like the Georgics of Virgil, a kind of composition for which he was well fitted, both by genius and knowledge, seems to have hovered before his fancy.—"It is a species of writing," he observed, "entirely new to me, and has filled my head with a thousand fancies of emulation; but, alas! when I read the Georgics, and then survey my own powers, 'tis like the idea of a Shetland pony drawn up by the side of a thorough-bred hunter to start for the plate." These words were addressed to Mrs. Dunlop; he afterwards says to Dr. Moore:—"The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I have no doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the Muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by Him who forms the secret bias of the soul; but I as firmly believe that excellence in the profession is the fruit of industry, attention, labour, and pains; at least, I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day—a day that may never arrive; but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour." The critics of those days seem not to have felt that he had already taken a flight above any bard of his time; they regarded the "Address to the Deil," "The Daisy," "The Mouse," and "The Cotter's Saturday Night," as "Orient pearls at random strung;" and held that their worth had yet to be decided by future works of more sustained excellence. This seems to have perplexed Burns; such opinions pointed to a school of verse in which he had never studied.

The Poet did not flourish; yet he seems to have done enough to ensure success as a farmer. He held the plough frequently with his own hands; and he loved to lay aside his coat, and with a sowing-sheet slung across his shoulder, stride over the new-turned furrows, and commit his seed-corn to the ground.—While his wife managed the cheese and butter department with something short of West country skill, he attended fairs where grain was sold, and sales where cattle were disposed of; and, though not averse to a merry-making or a dance, he seems neither to have courted nor shunned them.—"Do you come and see me," he says to Richard Brown. "We must have a social day, and perhaps lengthen it out with half the night before you go again to sea. You are the earliest friend I now have on earth, my brothers excepted; and is not that an endearing circumstance? When you and I first met, we were at a green period of human life. The twig could easily take a bent, but would as easily return to its former state. You and I not only took a mutual bent, but, by the melancholy, though strong, influence of being both of the family of the unfortunates, we were intertwined with one another in our growth towards advanced age; and blasted be the sacrilegious hand that shall attempt to undo the union!" He loved old friendships to continue, and rejoiced in the happiness of his early companions.

The diffusion of knowledge was a favourite object with Burns; for this he had established his reading and debating-clubs in the west, and in the same spirit he now desired to excite a love of literature among the portioners and peasants of Dunscore. He undertook the management of a small parochial library, and wrote out the rules. His friend, Gordon, a writer, happened to drop in while he was busy with the regulations, and began to criticise the language—a matter on which the bard was sensitive.—"Come, come, sir," said he, "let me have my rules again. Had I employed a Dumfries lawyer to draw them out, he would have given me bad Latin, worse Greek, and English spoken in the fourteenth century." Mr. Riddell, of Friar's-Carse, and other gentlemen, contributed money and books. The library commenced briskly, but soon languished. The Poet could not always be present at the meetings; the subscribers lived far separate; disputes and disunion crept in, and it died away like a flower which fades for want of watering. Burns alludes ironically to the scheme in one of his letters. Wisdom, he averred, might be gained by the mere handling of books. One night, he said, while he presided in the library, a tailor, who lived some mile or so distant, turned over and over the leaves of a folio Hebrew concordance, the gift of a clergyman.—"I advised him," said Burns, "to bind the book on his back—he did so; and Stitch, in a dozen walks between the library and his own house, acquired as much rational theology as the priest had done by forty years' perusal of the pages." Such ironical sallies were not likely to allure subscribers or give knowledge to the ignorant.

[Nevertheless, his letters to the booksellers on the subject of this subscription library do him much honour: his choice of authors, which business was actually left to his discretion, being in the highest degree judicious. Such institutions are now common, indeed almost universal, in the rural districts of Southern Scotland; but it should never be forgotten that Burns was among the first, if not the very first, to set the example. "He was so good," says Mr. Riddell, "as to take the whole management of this concern: he was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to our little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit and exertions for their improvement and information.]*

[* Letter to Sir John Sinclair, Bart., in the Statistical Account of Scotland—Parish of Dunscore.]

Some have hinted that his appointment in the Excise was unfortunate, as it led to the temptations of pleasant company and social excess. There is no situation under the sun free from this; even a farmer is as much exposed to such allurements as any one. The Poet, a good judge in all such matters, looked with a different eye upon it; nor is there anything too romantic in the wish that journeying along the green vales, and among the fine hills of Nithsdale and Galloway, might inspire his muse, and aid him in poetic composition. "I do not know," he said to Ainslie, "if I have informed you that I am now appointed to an Excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. I know not how the word exciseman, or still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I, too, have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a-year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow, is no bad settlement for a *poet*. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting serjeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable, audience in the streets of Kilmarnock:—'Gentlemen, for your farther and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown; and, consequently, with us, an honest man has the surest chance for preferment.'"

In the same strain he writes to his friend Blacklock:—

"But what d'ye think, my trusty fier,
I'm turned a gauger.—Peace be here!
Parnassian queans, I fear, I fear,
Ye'll now disdain me!
And then my fifty pounds a-year
Will little gain me.

"Ye glaiket, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha, by Castalia's wimplin' streamies
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

"I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies;
Ye ken yoursel my heart right proud is—
I need na vaunt;
But I'll sned besoms—thraw saugh woodies
Before they want."

In these verses we read of the man as well as the poet; he put more of himself into all he wrote than any other poet, ancient or modern.

"On one occasion, however," says Lockhart, "he takes a higher tone. 'There is a certain stigma,' writes the Poet to Bishop Geddes, 'in the name of exciseman; but I do not intend to borrow honour from my profession;' which may, perhaps, remind the reader of Gibbon's lofty language, on finally quitting the learned and polished circles of London and Paris for his Swiss retirement:—'I am too modest, or too proud, to rate my value by that of my associates."—

"His farm," says Currie, "no longer occupied the principal part of his care or his thoughts. It was not at Ellisland that he was now in general to be found. Mounted on horseback, this high-minded Poet was pursuing the defaulters of the revenue among the hills and vales of Nithsdale, his roving eye wandering over the charms of nature, and muttering his wayward fancies as he moved along." Currie means something like censure in this passage. The Poet had a duty, and an arduous one, to perform; his district reached far and wide; he was ever punctual in his attendance; and, though he might plough and sow, reap and graze Ellisland by deputy, it required his own eyes and hands to superintend the revenue in ten parishes. That he acquitted himself diligently, but gently, in his vocation, there is abundance of proof; against the regular smugglers his looks were stern and his hand was heavy, while to the poor country dealer he was mild and lenient. The Poet and a brother exciseman one day suddenly entered a poor widow's shop in Dunscore, and made a seizure of smuggled tobacco.—"Jenny," said the Poet, "I expected this would be the upshot; here, Lewars, take note of the number of rolls as I count them. Now Jock, did ye ever hear an auld wife numbering her threads before check-reels were invented? Thou's ane, and thou's no ane, and thou's ane a' out—listen." As he handed out the rolls, he went on with his humorous enumeration, but dropping every other roll into Janet's lap. Lewars took the desired note with much gravity, and saw as if he saw not the merciful conduct of his companion. On another occasion, information had been lodged against a widow who kept a small public-house in Thornhill; it was a fair-day—her house was crowded—Burns came suddenly to the back door and said, "Kate, are ye mad?—the supervisor will be in on ye in half an hour!" This merciful hint saved the poor woman from ruin.*

[* A writer in the Edinburgh Literary Journal for 1829 gives the following lively anecdote:—"It may be readily guessed with what interest I heard, one Thornhill fair-day, that Burns was to visit the market. Boy as I then was, an interest was awakened in me respecting this extraordinary man, which was sufficient, in addition to the ordinary attraction of a village fair, to command my presence in the market. Burns actually entered the fair about twelve; and man, wife, and lass, were all on the outlook for a peep of the Ayrshire ploughman. I carefully dogged him from stand to stand, and from door to door. An information had been lodged against a poor widow of the name of Kate Watson, who had ventured to serve a few of her old country friends with a draught of unlicensed ale, and a lacing of whisky on this village jubilee. I saw him enter her door, and anticipated nothing short of an immediate seizure of a certain grey-beard and barrel, which, to my personal knowledge, contained the contraband commodity our bard was in quest of. A nod, accompanied by a significant movement of the fore-finger, brought Kate to the door-way entrance, and I was

The muse, as he expected, accompanied Burns in his gauging excursions. He had occasion to be at Lochmaben; Maxwell, then provost of that very small but very ancient borough, was his correspondent:—he was also acquainted with that "worthy veteran in religion and good fellowship, the Reverend Mr. Jeffrey." At the manse of the latter he met "the blue-eyed lass" in his daughter Jean, then a rosy girl of seventeen, with winning manners and laughing blue eyes. The Poet drank tea and spent the evening in the manse; and next morning, greatly to the increase of her blushes, sent her the song which has made her immortal:—

"I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I'll dearly rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
Twa laughing een o' bonny blue:
She talk'd, she smil'd, my heart she wil'd,
She charm'd my soul, I wistna how;
But ay the stound, the deadly wound,
Came frae her een sae bonny blue."

In April, he wrote the poem of "The wounded hare:" he has himself described the circumstances under which he composed it, in a letter to his friend Mr. Alexander Cunningham of Edinburgh:—"One morning lately, as I was out pretty early in the fields, sowing some grass seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying for our sport individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us materially, which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue." His account was confirmed to me by James Thomson, the son of a neighbouring farmer.—"I remember Burns," said he, "weel; I have some cause to mind him—he used to walk in the twilight along the side of the Nith, near the march, between his land and ours. Once I shot at a hare that was busy on our braird; she ran bleeding past Burns: he cursed me and ordered me out of his sight, else he would throw me into the water. I'm told he has written a poem about it."—"Aye, that he has," I replied; "but do you think he could have thrown you into the Nith?"—"Thrown! aye, I'll warrant could he, though I was baith young and strong." He submitted the poem—certainly not one of his best—to Dr. Gregory; the result scared him from consulting in future professional critics. —Burns said, "I believe Dr. Gregory, in his iron justice, is a good man, but he crucifies me: like the devils, I believe and tremble. Such criticisms but tend to crush the spirit out of man."

The applause which his next attempt obtained afforded some consolation for such merciless strictures; this was the song, "O! were I on Parnassus' hill;" the heroine was Mrs. Burns; the transition, from the "forked hill" and "fabled fount" of the heathen to a nearer stream and Scottish mount of inspiration, has been much admired.

"O! were I on Parnassus hill!
Or had o' Helicon my fill,
That I might catch poetic skill,
To sing how dear I love thee.

But Nith maun be my muse's well,
My muse maun be thy bonnie sel',
On Corsincon I'll glow'r and spell,
And write how dear I love thee."

He presented the song to Miss Staig, an accomplished young lady of Dumfries, saying, "should the respectful timidity of any one of her lovers deny him power of speech, it would be charitable to teach him, 'O! were I on Parnassus' hill,' so that he might not lie under the double imputation of being neither able 'to sing nor say.'"

The thoughts of Burns had travelled far from Corsincon, and the waters of the Nith, when he wrote "My heart's in the Highlands." The words suit a Gaelic air, and have much of the northern spirit in them:—

"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe;
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go!"

Nor were his thoughts at his own fire-side when he penned his humorous and sarcastic ditty, "Whistle o'er the lave o't." Wedded infelicity is the theme of many of our old minstrels:—

"Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
Bonny Meg was Nature's child—
Wiser men than me's beguil'd;
Whistle o'er the lave o't."

"The Kirk's Alarm," a poem personal and satiric, with gleams of wit and poetry worthy of a subject less local, was the offspring of this season. It was composed at the request of some of his Ayrshire friends, to aid the Rev. Dr. Macgill, against whom the Kirk was directing its thunder for having written a heretical book. The reverend delinquent yielded, and was forgiven—not so the poet: so much more venial is it in devout men's eyes to be guilty of heresy than of satire!

His fancy was now and then fond of "stepping westward;" this is sufficiently indicated in his "Braes o' Ballochmyle," and with deeper

near enough to hear the following words distinctly uttered:—"Kate, are ye mad? D'ye ken that the supervisor and me will be upon you in the course of forty minutes? Guid-by t' ye at present."—Burns was in the street, and in the midst of the crowd, in an instant, and I had access to know that his friendly hint was not neglected. It saved a poor lonely widow from a fine of several pounds."]

feelings still in his "To Mary in Heaven," written near the close of September, 1789. The circumstances under which the latter lyric was composed pressed painfully on the mind of his wife.—"Robert," she said, "though ill of a cold, had busied himself all day with the shearers in the field, and, as he had got much of the crop in, was in capital spirits. But when the gloaming came, he grew sad about something—he could not rest. He wandered first up the water-side, and then went to the barn-yard; and I followed him, begging him to come in, as he was ill, and the air was cold and sharp. He always promised, but still remained where he was, striding up and down, and looking at the clear sky, and particularly at a star that shone like another moon. He then threw himself down on some loose sheaves, still continuing to gaze at the star." When he came in he seemed deeply dejected, and sat down and wrote the first verse:—

"Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"

On this touching topic he writes to Mrs. Dunlop:—"Can it be possible that, when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence? When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those who knew me, and the few who loved me; when the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey unsightly of reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod, shall I be yet warm in life, seeing and seen—enjoying and enjoyed? If there is another life, it must be only for the just, the benevolent, the amiable, and the humane. What a flattering idea, then, is a world to come! Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it! There I should meet an aged parent, now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world, against which he so bravely struggled. There should I, with speechless agony of rapture, again recognize my lost—my ever dear Mary! whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love." Few wives would interpret these melancholy allusions into happiness for themselves. Mrs. Burns seems to have conducted herself with much gentleness.

These melancholy moods seldom lasted long—and they were generally relieved by verse. Poetry, therefore, had some share in them. Nor was it unnatural, when the world pressed and the cloud descended, for Burns to cheer the present by bright images of the past. Had fortune been more kind, he would have looked less at the Highland-Mary star, and indulged, probably, in strains of a more enlivening nature. In those days the Poet describes himself as the prey of nervous affections.—"I cannot reason," he says to the same respected lady, "I cannot think; and but to you I would not venture to write any thing above an order to a cobbler. You have felt too much of the ills of life not to sympathize with a diseased wretch, who has impaired more than half of any faculties he possessed."

Yet in the same season he wrote his joyous strain, "Willie brewed a peck o' maut." The history of the song involves that of the Poet. Nicol, by the advice of Burns, bought the farm of Laggan in his neighbourhood, and in the autumn vacation came to look after his purchase. Allan Masterton accompanied him, and, summoning the bard, they resolved to have a "house-heating." Nicol furnished the table, Burns produced the song, and Masterton set it to music. All these lyrics, and others of scarcely inferior merit, were printed in the third volume of the Musical Museum. The song called "The banks of the Nith" partakes of the sobriety of verses written to please a friend. In vain the Poet thinks of the Thames flowing proudly to the sea, and of the Nith—

"Where Comyns ance had high command."

His muse will not be satisfied till he gives her license upon another strain—the song of "Tam Glen." Thought flows free, and words "come skelpin' rank and file," in this happy lyric. The heroine has set her heart on honest Tam, and, in spite of the persuasions and bribes of her relations, perseveres in her attachment. Besides his personal qualities, there are other reasons of weight:—

"The last Halloween I was waukin',
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness came up the house staukin'—
The very grey breeks o' Tam Glen."

Burns went to a school in which the master caused his scholars to sing this song. The Poet was hard to please in matters of sentiment, and said, "Children can't do such things, sir; they sing, but it is without feeling."

He had now made the acquaintance and acquired the friendship of some of the chief families of the vale of Nith; the doors of Friars-Carse, Terraughty, Blackwood, Closeburn, Barjarg, Dalswinton, Glenae, Kirkconnel, and Arbigland were opened to receive and to welcome him; nor were those of Drumlanrig shut. The Duke of Queensbury was represented by John M'Murdo, who had taste to appreciate the merits of such a man as Burns. In one of his letters to that gentleman, he says, in his usual characteristic way,—"A poet and a beggar are in so many points of view alike, that one might take them for the same individual character under different designations; were it

not that though, with a trifling poetic license, most poets may be styled beggars, yet the converse of the proposition does not hold, that every beggar is a poet. In one particular, however, they remarkably agree: if you help either the one or the other to the picking of a bone or a mug of ale, they will very willingly repay you with a song. I feel myself indebted to you, in the style of our ballad printers, for 'five excellent new songs.' The enclosed is nearly my newest song, 'The Country Lass,' and one that has cost me some pains, though that is but an equivocal mark of its excellence. You see, sir, what it is to patronize a poet; 'tis like being a magistrate in a petty borough; you do them the favour to preside at their council for one year, and your name bears the prefatory stigma of bailie for life. With, not the compliments, but the best wishes, the sincerest prayers, of the season for you, that you may see many and happy years with Mrs. M'Murdo and your family—two blessings, by the bye, to which your rank does not by any means entitle you; a loving wife and a fine family being almost the only good things of this life to which the farm-house and cottage have an exclusive right."

In the midst of visits given and received—kindness done by gentlemen, and words of applause, more welcome still, from ladies, Burns was thoughtful and unhappy. From the pursuit of "pension, post, or place," he had withdrawn with embittered feelings to a farm, and now he found that the plough and the sickle failed to give even the rustic abundance he had contemplated. On Ellisland he had expended all his money in the first year of occupation:—in the second year he writes to Provost Maxwell, of Lochmaben,—"My poor distracted mind is so jaded, so torn, so racked, and bedeviled with the task of the superlatively damned—making one guinea do the business of three, that I detest, abhor, and swoon at the very word business, though no less than four letters of my very short sirname are in it." He felt, too, that he had laid out his money in vain. He suspected his mistake early. It will be recollected that he had previously said, "I do not find my farm the pennyworth I was taught to expect; but I believe in time it may be a saving bargain." To Dr. Moore, he afterwards says:—"I have married my Jean, and taken a farm: with the first step, I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied; with the last, it is rather the reverse." Still he did not despair; nay, he sometimes saw in imagination the poet-farmer high in the scale of opulence as well as fame.—"I am here in my old way," he writes to Mr. Macauley, "holding the plough, marking the growth of my corn, or the health of my dairy, and at times sauntering by the delightful windings of the Nith, on the margin of which I have built my humble domicile, praying for seasonable weather, or holding an intrigue with the muses, the only gipsies with whom I have now any intercourse."

[Burns, in his perpetual perambulations over the moors of Dumfries-shire had every temptation to encounter which bodily fatigue, the blandishments of hosts and hostesses, and the habitual manners of those who acted along with him in the duties of the Excise, could present. He was, moreover, wherever he went, exposed to perils of his own, by the reputation which he had earned, and by his extraordinary powers of entertainment in conversation; and he pleased himself with thinking, in the words of one of his unpublished letters to the Lady Harriot Don (dated Ellisland, December 23rd, 1789), that "one advantage he had in this new business was the knowledge it gave him of the various shades of character in man—consequently assisting him in his trade as a poet."—From the castle to the cottage, every door flew open at his approach; and the old system of hospitality, then flourishing, rendered it difficult for the most soberly inclined guest to rise from any man's board in the same trim that he sat down to it. The farmer, if Burns was seen passing, left his reapers, and trotted by the side of Jenny Geddes, until he could persuade the bard that the day was hot enough to demand an extra libation. If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled round the ingle; the largest punch-bowl was produced; and

'Be our's this night—who knows what comes to-morrow?'

was the language in every eye in the circle that welcomed him.* The highest gentry of the county, whenever they had especial merriment in view, called in the wit and eloquence of Burns to enliven their carousals.]

The new-year's-day of 1790 wrought a change in his mind, or rather confirmed his worst suspicions: he had now brought two years' crop to the flail, and was thus enabled to weigh the certain past against future hope. We may gather the result from his words to Gilbert:—"I have not, in my present frame of mind, much appetite for exertion in writing: my nerves are in a cursed state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul. This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself; it is a ruinous affair on all hands. But let it go—I'll fight it out and be off with it." Though Ellisland promised

[* These particulars are from a letter of David Maculloch, Esq., who being at this period a very young gentleman, a passionate admirer of Burns, and a capital singer of many of his serious songs, used often, in his enthusiasm, to accompany the Poet on his professional excursions. LOCKHART.]

before the fourth of the lease was done to be a saving bargain, there is no doubt that at first it was a losing one. The heart had been wrought out of the ground by preceding tenants, and the crops of grass or corn which it yielded to the Poet afforded but a bare return for labour and outlay.

The condition of a farmer in Nithsdale was in those days sufficiently humble; his one-story house had a clay floor; his furniture was made by the hands of a ploughwright; he presided at meals among his children and domestics; performed family worship, "duly even and morn;" and only put on the look of a man of substance when he gave a dinner to a douce neighbour. Out of doors all was rude and slovenly: his plough was the clumsy old Scotch one: his harrows had oftener teeth of wood than of iron; his carts were heavy and low-wheeled — the axles were of wood; he winnowed his corn by means of the wind, between two barn-doors; and he refused to commit his seed to the earth till, seating himself on the ground at mid-day, it gave warmth instead of receiving it. He was too poor to make experiments, and too prejudiced to speculate. He rooted up no bushes, dug up no stones; neither did he drain or enclose; the dung which he bestowed on the soil was to raise a crop of potatoes: now and then it received a powdering of lime. His crops corresponded with his skill and his implements; they were weak, and only enabled him to pay his rent and lay past a few pounds Scots, annually.

Much of the ground in Nithsdale was leased at seven, ten, and some fields of more than ordinary richness, at fifteen, shillings an acre. The farmer differed little in wealth and condition from the peasants around him. The war, which soon commenced, raised him in the scale of existence; the army and navy consumed much of his produce; for a hundred thousand soldiers, in time of war, require as much provision as two hundred thousand in times of peace. With the demand, the price of corn augmented; the farmer rose on the wings of sudden wealth above his original condition; his house obtained a slated roof and sash windows; carpets were laid on the floors, instruments of music were placed in the parlours; he wore no longer a coat of home-made cloth; he sat no longer at meals among his servants; family devotion was relinquished as a thing unfashionable, and he became a sort of rustic gentleman, who rode a blood-horse, and galloped home on market-nights at the peril of his own neck and to the terror of all humble pedestrians. His sons were educated at college, and went to the bar or got commissions in the army: his daughters changed their linsey-woolsey gowns for others of silk; carried their heads high, and blushed for their relations who were numbered among the wrights, masons, and shoemakers of the land. When a change like this took place among the farmers of the vale, the dews of wealth would have fallen at the same time on the tenant of Ellisland; but Burns was too poor and too impatient to wait long for better times, he resolved to try another year or two, and then abandon farming for ever, if it refused to bring the wealth to him which it did to others.

Having made this covenant to himself, he resumed his intercourse with the muse, and produced one of the best as well as the longest of all his poems—"Tam O'Shanter." For this noble tale we are indebted to something like accident. Grose, the antiquarian, was on a visit to Riddell of Friars-Carse, who, like himself, had a collection

> "Of auld nick-nackets,
> Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets
> Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets
> A towmont gude."

The Poet was invited to add wings to the evening hours, and something like friendship was established between him and the social Englishman, which both imagined would be lasting. In conversing about the antiquities of Scotland, Burns begged that Grose would introduce Alloway kirk into his projected work; and, to fix the subject on his mind, related some of the wild stories of devilry and witchcraft with which Scotland abounds. The antiquarian listened to them all, and then said, "Write a poem on it, and I'll put in the verses with an engraving of the ruin." Burns set his muse to work; he could hardly sleep for the spell that was upon him, and with his "barmy noddle working prime," walked out to his favourite path along the river-bank.

"Tam O'Shanter" was the work of a single day; the name was taken from the farm of Shanter in Carrick, the story from tradition. Mrs. Burns relates that, observing Robert walking with long swinging sort of strides and apparently muttering as he went, she let him alone for some time; at length she took the children with her and went forth to meet him; he seemed not to observe her, but continued his walk; "on this," said she, "I stept aside with the bairns among the broom — and past us he came, his brow flushed and his eyes shining; he was reciting these lines:—

> 'Now Tam! O Tam! had thae been queans,
> A' plump and strapping in their teens,
> Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
> Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!
> Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
> That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
> I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies!
> For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!'

I wish ye had but seen him! he was in such ecstacy that the tears were happing down his cheeks." The Poet had taken writing materials with him, and, leaning on a turf fence

which commanded a view of the river, he committed the poem to paper, walked home, and read it in great triumph at the fire-side. It came complete and perfect from his fancy at the first heat;—no other work in the language contains such wondrous variety of genius in the same number of lines. His own account of his rapture in composition confirms the description of Mrs. Burns:—"I seized," said he to a correspondent, "my gilt-headed Wangee rod in my left hand—an instrument indispensably necessary—in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride—quick and quicker,—out skipt I among the broomy banks of the Nith to muse."

Burns found his tale in several prose traditions. One stormy night, amid squalls of wind and blasts of hail—in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in, a farmer was plashing homewards from the forge with plough-irons on his shoulder. As he approached Alloway kirk, he was startled by a light glimmering in the haunted edifice; he walked up to the door, and saw a cauldron suspended over a fire, in which the heads and limbs of unchristened children were beginning to simmer. As there was neither fiend nor witch to protect it, he unhooked the cauldron, poured out the contents, and carried his trophy home, where it long remained an evidence of the truth of his story. We may observe in the poem the use made by Burns of this Kyle legend. Another story supplied him with two of his chief characters. A farmer having been detained by business in Ayr, found himself crossing the old bridge of Doon about the middle of the night. When he reached the gate of Alloway kirk-yard, a light came streaming from a Gothic window in the gabel, and he saw with surprise a batch of witches dancing merrily round their master the devil, who was keeping them in motion by the sound of his bag-pipe. The farmer stopt his horse and gazed at their gambols; he saw several old dames of his acquaintance among them; they were footing it in their smocks. Unfortunately for him, one of them wore a smock too short by a span or so, which so tickled the farmer that he burst out with "Weel luppen, Maggie wi' the short sark!" He recollected himself, turned his horse's head and spurred and switched with all his might towards the brig of Doon, well knowing that—

"A running stream they darena cross."

When he reached the middle of the arch, one of the hags sprang to seize him, but nothing was on her side of the stream saving the horse's tail, which gave way to her grasp as if touched by lightning.

In a Galloway version of the tradition, it is recorded that the witch, seizing the horse by the tail, stopt it in full career in the centre of the bridge; upon which the farmer struck a back-handed blow with his sword that set him free, and enabled him to pass the stream without further molestation. On reaching his own house he found, to his horror, a woman's hand hanging in his horse's tail; and next morning was informed that the handsome wife of one of his neighbours was dangerously ill, and not expected to live. He went to see her—she turned away her face from him, and obstinately refused to say what ailed her; upon which he forcibly bared her wounded arm, and, displaying the bloody hand, accused her of witchcraft and dealings with the devil; thereupon she made a confession, and was condemned and burnt. The Galloway legend was too tragic for the aim of the Poet; it would have jarred with the wild humour of the scene in the kirk, and prevented him from displaying his wondrous powers of uniting the laughable with the serious, and the witty with the awful. Cromek, a curious inquirer, was informed on the spot that the places where the packman was smothered in the snow—where drunken Charlie broke his neck—where the murdered child was found by hunters—and where the mother of poor Mungo hanged herself, were no imaginary matters. The poetry of Burns is full of truth.

"Tam O'Shanter" was received with all the applause to which it is richly entitled. "I have seldom in my life," says Lord Woodhouslee, "tasted of higher enjoyment from any work of genius than I have received from this composition; and I am much mistaken if this poem alone, had you never written another syllable, would not have been sufficient to have transmitted your name down to posterity with high reputation." Of this "happiest of all mixtures of spirituality and practical life," as Sir Egerton Brydges calls the tale, the poet was justly proud. He carried it in his pocket, and read it willingly to those in whose taste he had any trust. He read it to my father. His voice was deep, manly, and melodious, and his eye sparkled as he saw the effect of his poem on all around—young and old. A writer who happened to be present on business, stung, perhaps, with that sarcastic touch on the brethren—

"Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
With lies seam'd, like a beggar's clout,"

remarked that he thought the language describing the witches' orgies obscure. "Obscure, sir," said Burns, "ye know not the language of that great master of your own art—the devil. If you get a witch for a client, you will not be able to manage her defence."

"The Whistle" is another poem of this happy season. The meeting, it seems, for deciding the ownership of the musical relique should have taken place sooner.—"Big with the idea," said Burns to Riddell, "of this important day (October 16, 1789,) at Friars-Carse, I have watched the elements and skies, in the full per-

suasion that they would announce it to the astonished world by some phenomena of terrific portent. The elements, however, seem to take the matter very quietly; they did not even usher in this morning with triple suns and a shower of blood, symbolical of the three potent heroes and the mighty claret-shed of the day. For me, as Thomson, in his Winter, says of the storm, I shall

> 'Hear astonish'd and astonish'd sing.'"

The story of the "Whistle" is curious:—A Dane came to Scotland with the Princess of Denmark, in the reign of our sixth James, and challenged all the topers of the north to a contest of the bottle. A Whistle of ebony was to be the prize of the day; this he had blown in triumph at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, and Warsaw, and was only prevented from doing the same at the Scottish court by Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwellton, who, after a contest of three days and three nights, left the Dane under the table,

> "And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill."

On Friday, 16th October, 1790, the Whistle was again contended for in the same element by the descendants of the great Sir Robert:—

> "Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
> Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
> And trusty Glenriddel, so skilled in old coins,
> And gallant Sir Robert, deep read in old wines."

And, that their deeds might not be inglorious, they chose an inspired chronicler to attend them:—

> "A bard was selected to witness the fray,
> And tell future ages the feats of the day:
> A bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
> And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been."

This is one of the most dramatic of lyrics; all is in character, and in the strictest propriety of sentiment and language. The contest took place at Friars-Carse, a place of great natural beauty; but the combatants closed the shutters against the loveliness of the landscape, either up the Nith or down, and, lighting the dining-room, ordered the corks of the claret to be drawn. They had already swallowed six bottles a-piece, and day was breaking, when Ferguson, decanting a quart of wine, dismissed it at a draught. Upon this Glenriddel, recollecting that he was an elder, and a ruling one in the kirk, and feeling he was waging an ungodly strife, meekly withdrew from the contest, and

> "Left the foul business to folks less divine."

Though Sir Robert could not well contend both with fate and quart bumpers, he fought to the last, and fell not till the sun arose. Not so Ferguson, and not so Burns; the former sounded a note of triumph on his Whistle:

> "Next up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink:—
> 'Craigdarroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink!
> But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
> Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime!'"

In truth, it is said that the Poet drank bottle for bottle in this arduous contest, and, when daylight came, seemed much disposed to take up the conqueror.

Though Burns had ten large parishes to look after as exciseman, and though the inclination of husbandmen for smuggling in those days kept him busy, his fields seemed as well cultivated, and his crops little less luxuriant, than those of his neighbours. But he felt that his plough was held without profit, and his dairy managed without gain, and remained for weeks at a time at home, intent on other matters than

> "Learning his tuneful trade from every bough."

How he demeaned himself as gauger, farmer, and poet, has been related by an able and observant judge:—"I had an adventure with him," said Ramsay of Ochtertyre, "when passing through Dumfries-shire in 1790, with Dr. Stewart of Luss. Seeing him pass quickly near Closeburn, I said to my companion, 'that is Burns.' On coming to the inn (Brownhill), the ostler told us he would be back in a few hours to grant permits; that where he met with anything seizable he was no better than any other gauger: in everything else he was a perfect gentleman. After leaving a note to be delivered to him on his return, I proceeded to his house, being curious to see his Jean, &c. I was much pleased with his *uxor Sabina qualis*, and the Poet's modest mansion, so unlike the habitation of ordinary peasants. In the evening, he suddenly bounced in upon us, and said as he entered, 'I come, to use the words of Shakspeare, stewed in haste.' In fact he had ridden incredibly fast. We fell into conversation directly, and soon got into the *mare magnum* of poetry. He told me he had now gotten a story for a drama, which he was to call "Rob Macquechan's Elshin," from a popular story of King Robert the Bruce being defeated on the water of Cairn, when the heel of his boot having loosened in the flight, he applied to Rob to fix it on, who, to make sure, ran his awl nine inches up the king's heel. We were now going on at a great rate, when Mr. S—— popped in his head, which put a stop to our discourse, which had become very interesting. Yet in a little while it was resumed; and such was the force and versatility of the bard's genius, that he made the tears run down Mr. S.'s cheeks, albeit unused to the poetic strain. Poor Burns! from that time I met him no more." The Poet had imagined a drama commencing with the early vicissitudes of the fortunes of Bruce—recording his strange, his heroic and sometimes laughable, adventures, till all ended in the glorious consummation at Bannockburn. He allowed, as was his wont, the

subject to float about in his mind, and drew out no plan nor list of characters on paper. "Those who recollect," says Sir Walter Scott, "the masculine and lofty tone of martial spirit which glows in the poem of Bannockburn will sigh to think what the character of the gallant Bruce might have proved under the hand of Burns!"

We find Burns at this period informing Graham of Fintry that the Excise business went on much smoother with him than he had expected, owing to the generous friendship of Mitchell the collector, and Findlater the supervisor.—"I dare to be honest," said he, "and I fear no labour. Nor do I find my hurried life greatly inimical to my correspondence with the muses; I meet them now and then as I jog among the hills of Nithsdale, just as I used to do on the banks of Ayr." Of the lyrical fruit of this intercourse, I must render some account.

In the composition of a song, Burns went to work like a painter: what a fine living model is to an artist forming a Venus or a Diana, a lovely woman was to the Poet. He was fascinated through the eye; he thought of the looks of the last fair one he had met, and mused on her charms till the proper inspiration came; and then he laid out colours worthy of a goddess, on

"Fair or foul, it maks na whether."

Jean Lorimer, "The lass of Craigie-burnwood," had levity at least equal to her beauty. When the first song in her praise was written she lived at Kemmis-hall in Nithsdale; she was extremely handsome, with uncommon sweetness in her smile, and joyousness in the glance of her eye. The Poet measured his verse over her charms to gratify a gentleman of the name of Gillespie, who was contending in vain with a military adventurer of the name of Whelpdale for the honour of her love. In "My tocher's the jewel," he expresses the scorn which a young lady feels at the selfish sentiments of her lover:

"It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree;
It's a' for the hiney he'll cherish the bee:
My laddie's sae mickle in love wi' the siller,
He canna hae luve to spare for me."

From love he went to wine; nothing came wrong to him. In this his poetic power resembled his conversational ability. "Gudewife, count the lawin'" is the very essence of sociality and glee:—

"Gane is the day, and mirk's the night,
But we'll ne'er stray for fau't o' light;
For ale and brandy's stars and moon,
And blude-red wine's the rising sun."

A little jacobitism was in his heart when he wrote "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame;" a little humour when he penned "What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?" and in "Yon wild mossy mountains" his mind wandered back to a part of his early history, which he says "is of no consequence to the world to know."

In a happier mood of mind Burns composed "Wha is that at my bower door?"—"It was suggested," said Gilbert, "to my brother, by the Auld man's Address to the Widow, printed in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany." A vein of pawkie simplicity runs through it.

"Wha is that at my bower-door?
O wha is it but Findlay?
Then gae yere gate, ye'se no be here—
Indeed maun I, quo' Findlay.

"What mak ye sae like a thief?
O come and see, quo' Findlay;
Before the morn ye'll work mischief—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

"Here this night, if ye remain—
I'll remain, quo' Findlay;
I dread ye'll ken the gate again—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay."

"'The bonnie wee thing' was composed," says the Poet, "on my little idol, the charming lovely Davies." In a letter to the lady herself, he lets us a little into the mystery of his ballad-making.—"I have heard of a gentleman of some genius who was dexterous with his pencil; wherever this person met with a character in a more than ordinary degree congenial to his heart, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, he said, as a nota-bene to point out the agreeable recollection to his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, is my muse to me; and the verses which I do myself the honour to send you are a memento exactly of the same kind that he indulged in. When I meet with a person after my own heart, I positively feel what an orthodox Protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts on my fancy like inspiration; and I can no more resist rhyming on the impulse than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air." No poet has offered prettier reasons for writing love-songs.

These complimental moods gave way to a feeling more serious, when the Poet wrote "Ae fond kiss, and then we sever." The song, I have heard, alludes to Clarinda, and is supposed to embody the sentiments of the Bard when he bade farewell to that Edinburgh beauty. It says all in a few words that can be said on the subject:—

"Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me—nae cheerful twinkle lights me:
Dark despair around benights me.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly—
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

The heroine of the "Banks and braes o' bonnie Doon," was Miss Kennedy of Dalgarrock, in Ayr-shire, a young creature beautiful, ac-

complished, and confiding; the song was altered, from its original simple measure, to suit music, accidentally composed by a writer in Edinburgh, whom a musician told to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord and preserve something like rhythm, and he would produce a Scots air. He did so, and this fine air, with a few touches from Clarke, was the result. The despair of "Ae fond kiss, and then we sever," gave way to the gentler sorrows of the "Banks and braes o' bonnie Doon;" and, in its turn, "Love will venture in," asserted the dignity of successful love. This is a very beautiful lyric: the Poet thinks on his mistress, and, looking at all manner of fine flowers, sees her, emblematically, in each: the lily, for purity; the daisy, for simplicity; and the violet, for modesty; are woven into this fragrant and characteristic chaplet.

Having obeyed the impulses of sorrow and serious love, mirth touched the strings of his harp, his heart brightened up, and he poured out, "O! for ane-and-twenty, Tam." The name of the heroine is lost; but her story is true to nature, and cannot be soon forgotten: there is a dance of words in the song suitable to the liveliness of the sentiment. "Sic a wife as Willie had," resembles the ironical and sarcastic chaunts of the old rustic ballad-makers: the picture of Willie's Spouse is not painted in kindly colours:—

"She has an ee—she has but ane,
The cat has twa the very colour,
Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump,
A clapper-tongue wad deave a miller;
A whiskin' beard about her mou',
Her nose and chin they threaten ither:
Sic a wife as Willie had
I wad nae gie a button for her."

This unsonsie dame dwelt in Dunscore, at no great distance from Ellisland; her descendants have none of her unlovesome qualities.

If Burns looked to living loveliness for the sake of making new songs, he looked also with affectionate eyes on the old mutilated lyrics of Scotland, and repaired them with unequalled skill. To the ballad of "Hughie Graham," he added some characteristic touches, as also to "Cock up your beaver." Into the latter he has infused a jacobite feeling:—

"Cock up your beaver and cock it fu' sprush,
We'll over the Border and gie them a brush;
There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour;
Hey! my brave Johnnie lad, cock up your beaver."

He softened a little the rudeness of "Eppie Macnab," added bitterness to "The weary pound o' tow; some of his fine feeling found its way into "The Collier laddie," and much acid irony was infused into "The carle of Kellyburn-braes."—Cromek informed me that, when he consulted Mrs. Burns respecting the changes which the genius of her husband had effected in the old songs, she ran her fingers along the pages of the Museum, saying, "Robert gave that one a brushing—this one got a brushing, too:—aye, I mind this one weel, it got a gay good brushing!" But when she came to "The carle of Kellyburn-braes," she said, "He gave this one a terrible brushing." Of these dread additions one specimen will suffice:

"The devil he swore by the edge of his knife,
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife;
The devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
He was not in wedlock, thank heav'n, but in hell."

The winter-time, which brings much leisure to the farmer, brought little or none to Burns. When he saw his corn secured against rain or snow; his

"Potatoe bings weel snuggit up frae skaith;"

his plough frozen in the half-drawn furrow, and heard the curler's roaring play intimating that winter reigned over the vale, he had to mount his horse and do duty as a gauger, leaving Ellisland to the skill of his wife and the activity of his servants. As early as the harvest of 1790, it was visible to those acquainted with such matters that, as a farmer, the Poet was not thriving; the crop promised, in the eyes of the calculating, to make but a small return, compared with the demand of the rent; and, when he ploughed his ground in the following winter and spring, it was whispered that he would do so no more. He regretted this the less as he now looked upon the Excise as sure bread, and an improving appointment. Some time during the year 1791, his salary was raised to seventy pounds, and he was promised a more compact and less laborious district. This eased his mind amid the loss which he knew he should sustain, in turning the utensils and stock of Ellisland into money. He did not communicate his intentions to any one, though he hesitated not to say that he was losing by his bargain.

This year he was doomed to lose old friends without acquiring new ones. The death of the Earl of Glencairn he regarded as a sore misfortune. That nobleman was not rich, nor was his influence great; but he had a sympathy with poetic feelings not common to men of rank. When he died, the hopes of the Poet seemed to have died also; his "Lament," on the occasion, was a sincere one; the words require only to be uttered by a young bard instead of an old one, to apply, in all respects, to himself. The verse is lyrical, and the sentiments those of nature:—

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

This is the language of a man who thought himself obliged. He wrote nothing half so tender or so touching on the death of the beautiful Miss Burnet, which happened about this time; he tried, but the words came with reluctance:—

"Life ne'er exulted in so rich a prize
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low."

Some will like better the compliment which he paid her in prose. On returning from a first visit to Lord Monboddo, his friend Geddes, of Leith, said, "Well, and did you admire the young lady?"—"I admired God Almighty more than ever," said the Poet; "Miss Burnet is the most heavenly of all His works!" He did not hesitate to use expressions bordering on profanity when speaking of female charms.

"As to my private concerns," he says to Dr. Moore, "I am going on a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the lists of the Excise as a supervisor. I had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn, the patron from whom all my fame and good fortune took its rise; independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence. So soon as the prince's friends had got in, my getting forward in the Excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be." In these modest hopes the Poet indulged. He had already numbered himself with the "prince's friends;" but the prince was far from power; and had Burns lived till "the dog had," as he said "got his day," he might have found reason to say with Scripture, "put not your trust in princes."

In addition to the sorrow which he felt for the loss of valuable friends, his horse fell with him and broke his arm; and his farm having swept away all his ready money, visions of poverty began to hover in his sight. "Poverty!" he exclaimed, "thou half-sister of Death—thou cousin-german of hell! oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remarks neglected and his person despised: while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause." In such sarcastic sentiments as these Burns began more and more to indulge:—"How wretched is the man," he says, "that hangs upon the favours of the great! —to shrink from every dignity of man at the approach of a lordly piece of self-consequence, who, amid all his tinsel and glitter, and stately hauteur, is but a creature formed as thou art—and, perhaps, not so well formed."

He could scarcely resist, however, the request of one of the vainest of those "lordly pieces of self-consequence," the Earl of Buchan—to come to the coronation of the bust of Thomson on Ednam-hill, at Dryburgh, on the 22nd of September, 1791.—"Suppose Mr. Burns," so runs the mandate, "should, leaving the Nith, go across the country, and meet the Tweed at the nearest point from his farm—and, wandering along the pastoral banks of Thomson's pure parent-stream, catch inspiration in the devious walk, till he finds Lord Buchan sitting on the ruins of Dryburgh; there the Commendator will give him a hearty welcome, and try to light his lamp at the pure flame of native genius, upon the altar of Caledonian virtue." The Poet had the sickle in his hand when the invitation came; he laid it down, took a walk along the banks of the Nith, composed the verses "to the Shade of Thomson," and sent them to apologize for his absence.

If his poetic feelings were awakened by the invitation of Lord Buchan, his jacobitical partialities were gratified by the present of a valuable snuff-box from Lady Winifred Maxwell, the last in direct descent of the noble family of Nithsdale. This was an acknowledgment for his "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots." There was a picture of that ill-starred princess on the lid.—"In the moment of poetic composition," said Burns, "the box shall be my inspiring genius."—The ballad is a pathetic one. He imagines the queen in an English prison; she hears the birds sing—feels the odours of flowers, and her heart swells with the season:

"Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang!"

He had been reading Percy's ballads, and his verses caught the olden hue and tone of those affecting compositions.

The great Glasgow road ran through the Poet's ground, and the coach often set down west-country passengers, who, trusting to the airt they came from, and the accessibility of the bard, made their sometimes unwelcome appearance at the door of Ellisland. Such visitations —from which no man of genius is free—consumed his time and wasted his substance—for hungry friends could not be entertained on air. A neighbour told me that he once found a couple of Ayr-shire travellers, plaided, capped, and over-alled, seated at the door of Burns—their sense of etiquette not allowing them to enter the house in such trim. They were drinking punch, toasting Ayr—auld town and new—vowing that Mauchline was the loveliest of all spots, and Kyle the heart of Scotland. They found their way into Dumfries some time during the night.

L. of C.

In the course of this summer two English gentlemen, who had met Burns in Edinburgh, paid him a visit at Ellisland. On calling at the house, they were told he had walked out on the banks of the Nith. They proceeded in search of him, and found him—

"In sooth it was in strange array."

On a rock that projected into the stream they saw a man angling; he had a cap of fox-skin on his head, a loose great-coat fixed round him by a belt from which hung an enormous Highland broadsword;—it was Burns. He received them with great cordiality, and asked them to share his humble dinner. On the table they found boiled beef, with vegetables and barley-broth, of which they partook heartily. After dinner, the bard told them he had no wine to offer, nothing better than Highland whiskey, of which Mrs. Burns set a bottle on the table, and placed his punch-bowl of Scottish marble before him. He mixed the spirit with water and sugar, filled their glasses, and invited them to drink. They were in haste—whiskey, to their southern stomachs, was scarcely tolerable; but the ardent hospitality of the Poet prevailed—the punch began to disappear, and his conversation was unto them as a charm. He ranged over a great variety of topics, illuminating whatever he touched. He related the tales of his infancy and of his youth; he recited some of the gayest and some of the tenderest of his poems; in the wildest of his strains of mirth he threw in some touches of melancholy, and spread around him the electric emotions of his powerful mind. The Highland whiskey improved in its flavour; the marble bowl was again and again emptied and replenished; the Poet's guests forgot the flight of time and the prudence becoming visiters, at the hour of midnight, lost their way returning to Dumfries, and could scarcely count its three steeples assisted by the morning dawn.

Burns still maintained his intercourse with the literati of Scotland. He visited Edinburgh once more, and finally arranged his affairs with the difficult Creech; called on some of his former intimates, and left his card at the door of several lords; but his reception seems, save from one or two, to have been uncordial. What the learned thought of the grasp of the Poet's mind may be gathered from the surprise which one of them expresses at his comprehending the meaning of Alison's work on the principles of taste:—"I own, sir," said the Poet to the philosopher, "that at first glance several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangour of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime than the twingle-twangle of a Jew's harp; that the delicate flexure of a rose-twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a burdock; and that from something innate and independent of all association of ideas;—these I had set down as irrefragable, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith." "This," says Dugald Stewart, I remember to have read with some degree of surprise at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed of the general principles of the law of association." It would seem, however, that the Poet, if convinced, was convinced against his will: he was slow in believing that at any time a burdock was esteemed equal in loveliness to a rose, or the chirp of a hedge-sparrow reckoned as noble as the cry of an eagle.

["It may naturally excite some surprise," says Lockhart, "that of the convivial conversation of so distinguished a convivialist, so few specimens have been preserved in the Memoirs of his Life. The truth seems to be that those of his companions who chose to have the best memory for such things happened also to have the keenest relish for his wit and his humour, when exhibited in their coarser phases. Among a heap of MS. memoranda with which I have been favoured, I find but little that one could venture to present in print; and the following specimens of that little must, for the present, suffice.

"A gentleman who had recently returned from the East Indies, where he had made a large fortune, which he showed no great alacrity about spending, was of opinion, it seems, one day, that his company had had enough of wine, rather sooner than they came to that conclusion: he offered another bottle in feeble and hesitating terms, and remained dallying with the corkscrew, as if in hopes that some one would interfere, and prevent further effusion of Bordeaux. 'Sir,' said Burns, losing temper, and betraying in his mood something of the old rusticity—'Sir, you have been in Asia, and for aught I know, on the Mount of Moriah, and you seem to hang over your *tappit-hen* as remorsefully as Abraham did over his son Isaac.—Come, Sir, to the sacrifice!'—

"At another party, the society had suffered considerably from the prosing of a certain well-known provincial *Bore* of the first magnitude; and Burns as much as any of them; although overawed, as it would seem, by the rank of the nuisance, he had not only submitted, but condescended to applaud. The grandee being suddenly summoned to another company in the same tavern, Burns immediately addressed himself to the chair, and demanded a bumper. The president thought he was about to dedicate his toast to the distinguished absentee: 'I give,' said the Bard, 'I give you the health, gentlemen all,—of the waiter that called my Lord —— out of the room!"]

If his poems of this year are not numerous, the "Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson"

is one of the sweetest and most beautiful of his latter compositions. He calls on nature, animate and inanimate, to lament the loss of one who held his honours immediately from God :—

"Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather-bud;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover:
An' mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood—
He's gane for ever!"

He copied out the poem, and sending it to his friend, M'Murdo, said, "You knew Henderson; I have not flattered his memory." The hero of this noble poem was a soldier of fortune: one who rose by deeds, and not by birth: he was universally esteemed in the northern circles for the generosity of his nature, his courtesy and gentlemanly bearing: he died young.

Burns wrote several new songs, and amended some old ones, during this season, for his friend Johnson's work. "Afton water" was an offering of other days to the accomplished lady of Stair and Afton. "Bonnie Bell" is in honour of the charms of a Nithsdale dame, and "The deuk's dang o'er my daddie" had its origin in an old chant, some of the words of which the song still retains. "She's fair and fause" records the unfortunate termination of a friend's courtship; there is all or more than the bitterness of disappointed love in the concluding verse :—

"Whoe'er ye be that woman love,
To this be never blind,
Nae ferlie 'tis, tho' fickle she prove,
A woman has't by kind.
O woman! lovely woman fair!
An angel form's fa'n to thy share,
'Twad been o'er meikle to gi'en thee mair—
I mean an angel mind."

"The Deil's awa' wi' the Exciseman" is at once witty and ludicrous. It harmonized with the feelings of the north, where a gauger was long looked on as a national grievance, or rather insult. "The Song of Death" is the last lyric which the rural walks of Ellisland inspired. On the 17th of December, 1791, he copied it for Mrs. Dunlop, and said,—"I have just finished the following song, which, to a lady, the descendant of Wallace, and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology." He imagines a field of battle, and puts his truly heroic song into the mouths of men wounded and dying; the sentiments uttered were those of his heart :—

"In the field of proud honour, our swords in our hands,
Our king and our country to save,—
While victory shines on life's last ebbing sands,
Oh! who would not die with the brave!"

"This hymn," says Currie, "is worthy of the Grecian muse, when Greece was most conspicuous for genius and valour." Burns thought of printing it separately with the air, which is a fine old Highland one; some one whom he consulted advised him against this, and so prevented him from making his country acquainted with his unaltered feeling, at a time when his character was beginning to be maligned by the secret whisperer and the pensioned spy.

Burns briefly, in his letters to his brother and others, intimates the loss he endured by continuing in Ellisland; but he has no where assigned reasons, nor entered into explanations. This has been misinterpreted to his injury. He alludes to his own trials, when he says to Mrs. Dunlop:—"I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family: I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, 'a cursed life!' As to a laird farming his own property, sowing his own corn in hope, and reaping it in spite of brittle weather, in gladness, knowing that none can say unto him, 'What dost thou?'—fattening his herds, shearing his flocks, rejoicing at Christmas, and begetting sons and daughters, until he be the venerated, grey-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat!"

When it was made known in December, 1791, that Burns was about to relinquish the lease of Ellisland, his merits as a farmer were eagerly canvassed by the husbandmen around. One imputed his failure to the duties of the Excise; to his being compelled to gallop two hundred miles per week, to inspect yeasty barrels, when his farm required his presence; another said that Mrs. Burns was intimate with a town life, but ignorant of the labours of barn and byre; while a third observed that Ellisland was out of heart, and, in short, was the dearest farm on Nithsdale. The failure of his farming projects, and the limited income with which he was compelled to support an increasing family and an expensive station in life, preyed upon his spirits; and, during these fits of despair, he was willing too often to become the companion of the thoughtless and the gross. I am grieved to say that, besides leaving the book too much for the bowl, and grave and wise friends for lewd and reckless companions, he was also in the occasional practise of composing songs, in which he surpassed the licentiousness, as well as the wit and humour, of the old Scottish muse. These have unfortunately found their way to the press, and I am afraid they cannot be recalled. "The reader," says Lockhart, "must be sufficiently prepared to hear that, from the time when he entered on his excise duties, the Poet more and more neglected the concerns of his farm: occasionally he might be seen holding the plough, an exercise in which he excelled, and was proud of excelling, or stalking down his furrows, with the white sheet of grain wrapt about him, a 'teaty seedsman;'

but he was more commonly occupied in far different pursuits."

Had Mr. Miller of Dalswinton been on the same friendly terms with the Poet as when, in a fit of generous feeling, he offered him the choice of his farms at a rent of his own fixing, Burns might have lived long, and, perhaps, prosperously, in Ellisland. But they were too haughty in their natures to continue friends; Miller required respect and submission, which the Poet was not disposed to pay; and I have heard it averred by one who was in a situation to know, that the former was not loth to get rid of a tenant by whose industry he had no chance of being enriched, from whom he could not well exact rent, and whose wit paid little respect to persons. The Poet dispersed his stock and implements by auction, among many eager purchasers; restored the land and onstead to the proprietor; and, paying him one pound fourteen shillings for dilapidations in thatch, glass, and slating, moved off with his household to Dumfries, leaving nothing at Ellisland but a putting-stone, with which he loved to exercise his strength—a memory of his musings which can never die, and three hundred pounds of his money sunk beyond redemption, in a speculation from which all augured happiness.

PART IV.—DUMFRIES.

Burns removed his wife and children, with his humble furniture, to a house near the lower end of the Bank-Vennel in Dumfries. The neighbourhood was to his mind; and, as this was near the stamp-office, it is probable that John Syme, the "Stamp-office Johnnie," of the Poet's election ballad, influenced his choice. He had other neighbours whom he could not but esteem: Captain Hamilton lived on the opposite side of the way; Provost Staig, with whose family Burns was already intimate, was but a few doors off, while Dr. Maxwell, a skilful physician, an accomplished gentleman, and a confirmed republican, dwelt in the next street. The Sands, where cattle are bought and sold, was beside him, the Nith was within a good stone's cast—the town too is compact and beautiful.

The Poet had no expensive acquaintance to entertain; and his wife, with a single servant, was frugal, and anxious to make the little they had go far. But he had no longer the rough abundance of a farm to resort to; his meal, his malt, his butter, and his milk, were all to buy, and his small salary required the guidance of a considerate head and hand. To calculate was easy, had it been possible to lay down an exact system of expenditure; as a man of genius, he was liable to the outlay of correspondence, distant and often unexpected; he was exposed to the inroads of friends and admirers, who consumed his time and his substance also; he longed for knowledge, which, to obtain, he had to buy; he desired to see by books what the republic of literature, of which he was a member, was about, and this required money; and he was, moreover, of a nature kindly and hospitable, and could not live in that state of frugal circumspection which a gentleman who kept a house, and sometimes a horse, on seventy pounds per annum, required.

Even the wandering poor were to the Poet a heavy tax; he allowed no one to go past his door without a halfpenny or a handful of meal. He was kind to such helpless creatures as are weak in mind, and saunter harmlessly about: a poor half-mad creature—the Madge Wildfire, it is said, of Scott—always found a mouthful ready for her at the bard's fire-side; nor was he unkind to a crazy and tippling prodigal named Quin. "Jamie," said the Poet one day, as he gave him a penny, "you should pray to be turned from the evil of your ways; you are ready to run now to melt that into whiskey." "Turn," said Jamie, who was a wit in his way, "I wish some one would turn me into the worm o' Will Hyslop's whiskey-still, that the drink might dribble continually through me." "Well said, Jamie!" answered the Poet, "you shall have a glass of whiskey once a week for that, if you'll come sober for it." A friend rallied Burns for indulging such creatures:—"You don't understand the matter," said he, "they are poets: they have the madness of the muse, and all they want is the inspiration—a mere trifle!"

The labours of the excise now and then led him along a barren line of sea-coast, extending from Caerlaverock-Castle, where the Maxwells dwelt of old, to Annan water. This district fronts the coast of England; and, from its vicinity to the Isle of Man, was in those days infested with daring smugglers, who poured in brandy, Holland-gin, tea, tobacco, and salt, in vast quantities. Small farmers, and persons engaged in inland traffic, diffused these commodities through the villages; they were generally vigorous and daring fellows, in whose hearts a gauger or two bred no dismay. They were well mounted, acquainted with the use of a cutlass, an oak-sapling, or a whip loaded with lead; and, when mounted between a couple of brandy-kegs, and their horses' heads turned to the hills, not one exciseman in ten dared to stop them. To prevent the disembarkation of run-goods, when a smuggling craft made its appearance, was a duty to which the Poet was liable to be called, and many a darksome hour he was compelled to keep watch, that the peasantry might not have the pleasure of drinking tea or brandy duty free. There was something which suited his fancy in all this. He had, galloping from point to point, much excitement of mind, and hopes of golden booty, but not without blows.

In whatever adventure he was engaged, "still his speech was song." Mounted on the successor of Jenny Geddes, whose mortal career closed at Ellisland, he "muttered his wayward fancies as he roved," and sang the beauty of the maidens of the land, and the pastoral charms of the country. It was in one of his expeditions against the smugglers that he wrote the brief but exquisite lyric, "Louis, what reck I by thee?" To say much in a few words is one of the characteristics of his muse:—

"Louis, what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean?
Dyvor, beggar loons to me,—
I reign in Jeannie's bosom!"

"Out over the Forth" is another of his short and lucky compositions. "The carding o't" belongs to the same class; nothing in all the compass of lyric verse is more truly natural:—

"I coft a stane o' haslock woo'
To make a coat to Johnnie o't;
For Johnnie is my only jo,
I lo'e him best of ony yet.
For though his locks be lyart grey,
And though his brow be beld aboon,
Yet I hae seen him on a day
The pride of a' the parishen."

One day, during the month of August, he was surprised by a visit from Miss Lesley Baillie, afterwards Mrs. Cuming of Logie, a beauty of the west of Scotland.—"On which," says Burns to Mrs. Dunlop, "I took my horse, though God knows I could ill spare the time, accompanied her father and her fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them, and, riding home, I composed the following ballad." Some of the verses of this song are in his best manner:—

"To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever:
For nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!
The deil he couldna skaith thee,
Nor aught that wad belang thee,
He'd look into thy bonny face,
And say, 'I canna wrang thee.'"

Most of the songs which I have hitherto noticed were written for the Museum of Johnson. A candidate of higher pretence now made his appearance: this was George Thomson. "I have," said he, in a letter to Burns, "employed many leisure hours in selecting and collecting the best of our national melodies for publication. I have engaged Pleyel, the most agreeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air. To render this work perfect, I am desirous of having the poetry improved, wherever it seems unworthy of the music; and that it is so, in many instances, is allowed by every one conversant with our musical collections. To remove this reproach would be an easy task to the author of 'the Cotter's Saturday Night;' and, for the honour of Caledonia, I would fain hope he may be induced to take up the pen."

An application such as this appealed to too many associations for Burns to resist; he replied with something like the enthusiasm of a lover when his mistress asks a favour, "As the request you make," said the Poet, September 16, 1792, "will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm. If you are for English verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed, at least, a sprinkling of our native tongue. As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm in which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money would be downright prostitution of soul!"

To stipulations such as these Thomson could have no objections to offer: he was glad to get the Bard on his own romantic terms. The first fruits of the bargain was "The Lea Rig." Though a beautiful song, it seems not to have been to the satisfaction of the Poet. "I tried my hand on the air," he says, "and could make nothing more of it than the verses which I enclose. Heaven knows they are poor enough! All my earlier love songs were the breathings of ardent passion; and though it might have been easy, in after times, to have given them the polish, yet that polish would have defaced the legend of my heart which was so faithfully inscribed on them."

"Highland Mary" followed this. The lyrical flow of the verse, and the truth and pathos of the sentiments, make it a favourite with all who have voices or feelings. "I think," says the Poet, "the song is in my happiest manner: it refers to one of the most interesting passages in my youthful days; and I own I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would ensure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition." He makes inanimate nature a sharer in his rapture:

"How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk!
How rich the hawthorn's blossom!
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary!"

This exquisite lyric proves how much the passionate affections of his youth still moved

him. He was ready, when Mary's image rose on his fancy, to pour out his feelings in song: he was more than usually inspired whenever he thought of her. The thorn, under whose shade the lovers sat, is still pointed out and held sacred by the peasantry.

The season of winter was propitious to the muse of Burns: there was something of old habit in this: the long evenings bring leisure to the farmer, and the farmer was still strong in him. "Auld Rob Morris" was written in November; the idea is taken from an earlier song, but the Burns-spirit soon gained the ascendant: he has painted the portrait of his heroine in similes:—

"She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May;
She's sweet as the evening amang the new hay;
As blythe and as artless as lambs on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e."

"Duncan Gray" came to the world in December, had he come in summer, he could not have been more "a lad of grace;" he went a wooing in a pleasant time, on gude Yule night, when all were joyous—but

"Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Looked asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh."

He was not however to be daunted with this: he knew woman better:—

"Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd,
Meg was deaf as Ailsa craig;
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in;
Grat his een baith bleer'd and blin';
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn!"

She relented.—"Duncan Gray," said the Poet, "is a light horse-gallop of an air which precludes sentiment—the ludicrous is its ruling feature."

"O! poortith, cauld and restless love" is a song full of other feelings: the heroine is said to have been Jean Lorimer, the lass of Craigieburn wood; and this is countenanced by the sentiment of one impassioned verse:—

"Her een sae bonny blue betray
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her o'erword ay
She talks of rank and fashion.
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?"

A being of a more celestial nature inspired that magnificent lyric, "The Vision." The ruined college of Lincluden, which stands among antique trees on a beautiful plot of rising ground, where the Cluden unites with the Nith, a little above Dumfries, was a favourite haunt of the Poet, as it is of all lovers of landscape beauty. On a moonlight evening he imagined himself musing alone among the splendid ruins: the dust of a Scottish princess, and the bones of one of the intrepid Douglasses brought recollections of ancient independence to his mind, while the quiet and beautiful scenery around awakened inspiration. For liquid ease of language and heroic grandeur of conception "The Vision" is unequalled: the commencing verse prepares us for the coming of something more than human:—

"As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa' flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care—
The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky,
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply."

While enjoying the scene, and looking on the northern streamers, the Vision of Liberty descended or arose before him: not the blood-stained nymph of that name beloved by the Jacobin Club, but a Liberty of Scottish extraction, stern and stalwart, of the rougher sex, attired like an ancient minstrel, carrying a harp, and wearing the symbol of freedom. The majestic apparition touched his harp, and chanted a strain which spoke of former joys and present sorrows, in language which the Poet durst only describe. This fine lyric was intended, with some modifications, to be wrought into the drama of "The Bruce," a subject never wholly out of the Bard's fancy.

From musing on woman's love and man's freedom, Burns was rudely awakened. An inquiry regarding the sentiments which he entertained, and the language in which he had indulged concerning "Thrones and Dominions," was directed to be made by the Commissioners of Excise, pursuant to instructions, it is said, received from high quarters. It will probably never be known who the pestilent informer against the Poet was: some contemptible wretch who had suffered from his wit, or who envied his fame, gave the information on which the Board of Excise acted, and he was subjected to a sort of inquisition. The times indeed in which he lived were perilous, and government found it no easy thing to rule or tranquillize the agitated passions of the people. A new light had arisen on the nations: freedom burst out like a summer's sun in France; monarchy was trampled under foot; democracy arose in its place; equality in all, save intellect, was preached up, and the true order of nature was to be restored to the delighted world.

This doctrine was welcomed widely in Scotland: it resembled, in no small degree, the constitution of the Calvinistic kirk, which is expressly democratic; and it accorded with the sentiments which education and knowledge awaken—for who is so blind as not to see that idols, dull and gross, occupy most of the high places which belong to genius as a birthright? It corresponded wondrously too with the notions of Burns: it harmonised with the plan which

he perceived in nature, and was in strict keeping with his sentiments of free-will and independence. "He was disposed," says Professor Walker, "from constitutional temper, from education, and from accidents of life, to a jealousy of power, and a keen hostility against every system which enabled birth and opulence to intercept those rewards which he conceived to belong to genius and virtue." That he desired to see true genius honoured, and wealthy presumption checked—that he wished to take his place on the table-land among peers and princes, and obtain station and importance—to adorn which his high powers, he believed, were given—were desires natural to a gifted mind; and it could not be but galling for him to see men who had not a tithe of his talent rolling in luxury, while he was doomed to poverty and dependence. That these sentiments were in the heart of Burns I know; that he ever sought to give them full utterance, or entertained them farther than as theories grateful to his mind, it would be difficult to find proof.

From these charges Burns strove to defend himself: he addressed his steady friend Graham, of Fintry, on the subject; the letter is dated December, 1792.—"I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your Board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government. Sir, you are a husband—and a father. You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones, turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected. I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors—if worse can be than those I have mentioned—hung over my head; and I say that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next, after my God, I am most devoutly attached. Fortune, sir, has made you powerful and me impotent—has given you patronage and me dependence. I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity; I could brave misfortune—I could face ruin—for, at the worst, 'Death's thousand doors stand open;' but the tender concerns which I have mentioned—the claims and ties which I see at this moment, and feel around me—how they unnerve courage and wither resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due. To these, sir, permit me to appeal; by these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me; and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved."

These are the words of his private letter: it enclosed another, intended for the eye of the commissioners, and which was laid before the Board. In the second epistle, Burns disclaimed all idea of setting up a republic, and declared that he stood by the constitutional principles of the revolution of 1688: at the same time he felt that corruptions had crept in, which every patriotic Briton desired to see amended.—"This last remark," says the Poet, in his celebrated letter to John Francis Erskine, afterwards Earl of Mar, "gave great offence; and one of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—'That my business was to act, *not to think;* and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be *silent* and *obedient.*' Mr. Corbet was my steady friend; so, between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted."

The above words were written by the Poet, April 13, 1793; yet Mr. Findlater, then his superior officer, says, "I may venture to assert that when Burns was accused of a leaning to democracy, and an inquiry into his conduct took place, he was subjected, in consequence thereof, to no more than perhaps a private or verbal caution, to be more circumspect in future. Neither do I believe his promotion was thereby affected, as has been stated." Burns, I apprehend, knew best how this was; an order to act, and not to think; and, whatever might be men and measures, to be silent and obedient, seems a sharp sort of private caution. That the records of the Excise-office, as some one assured Lockhart, exhibit no traces of this too memorable matter, is not to be wondered at: expulsions alone are entered—or, if the records say more, memoranda, so little to the honour of the commissioners, will neither be eagerly sought for, nor willingly found. That Burns never got forward is certain; that he ceased to speak of his hopes of advancement, is also true. What was the cause of this? That it did not arise from his want of skill or his inattention to his duties, Findlater furnishes undeniable testimony, and other evidence can readily be found; nor was it because death slipt too early in and frustrated the desire of the Board to advance him, for he survived their insulting and crushing inquiry more than three years and a half. He survived, indeed, but he was no longer the bright and enthusiastic being who looked forward with eager hope; who ascended in fancy the difficult steeps of fame, and who set coteries in a roar of laughter, or moved them to tears.

Reasons for this harshness on the part of Government—for the Board of Excise was but the acting servant—have been anxiously sought, in the words and deeds of Burns.—"He stood," says Walker, "on a lofty eminence, surrounded by enemies as well as by friends, and no indiscretion which he committed was suffered to escape." His looks were watched; his words

weighed; and, wheresoever he went, the eyes of the malignant and the envious were on him. I have been told, by one incapable of misleading me, that Burns sometimes made his appearance in a club of obscure individuals in Dumfries, where toasts were given, and songs sung which required closed doors. I have also been informed that when invited to a private dinner, where the entertainer proposed "the health of William Pitt," the Poet said sharply, "Let us drink the health of a greater and better man—George Washington;" and it is also true that when Dumourier, the republican general, deserted the cause of his country, and joined her enemies, Burns rashly chanted that short song, beginning

"You are welcome to despots, Dumourier."

Nay more, I have the proof before me that he wrote a scoffing ballad on the foreign sovereigns who united to crush French liberty; but then all these matters happened after, not before, he was "documented" by the Board of Excise. That he forgot now and then what was due to the dignity of his genius, is no new admission. The club which sung songs with closed doors, did so to hinder the landlady, not the landlord, from hearing; the dinner where he toasted Washington, and was sullen because it was not drunk, took place in 1793. In Midsummer the same year, Dumourier forsook the standard of his country, and was welcomed by despots; and with regard to the ballad on the sovereigns, I am sure the gravest of them all would have laughed heartily at the vivid but indecorous wit of the composition.

That Burns was nevertheless very indiscreet, it would be vain to deny. "I was at the play in Dumfries, October, 1792," thus writes, in 1835, a gentleman of birth and talent, "the Caledonian Hunt being then in town—the play was 'As you like it;' Miss Fontenelle, Rosalind—when 'God save the King' was called for and sung; we all stood up, uncovered—but Burns sat still in the middle of the pit, with his hat on his head. There was a great tumult, with shouts of 'Turn him out!' and 'Shame, Burns!' which continued a good while, at last he was either expelled or forced to take off his hat—I forget which."

A more serious indiscretion has been imputed to him. Lockhart relates that, on the 27th of February, 1792, a smuggling brig entered the Solway, and Burns was one of the party of officers appointed to watch her motions. It was soon discovered that her crew were numerous, well armed, and likely to resist; upon which Lewars, a brother exciseman, galloped off to Dumfries, and Crawford, the superintendent, went to Ecclefechan for military assistance. Burns manifested much impatience at being left on a cold exposed beach, with a force unequa to cope with those to whom he was opposed and exclaimed against the dilatory movements of Lewars, wishing the devil might take him. Some one advised him to write a song about it; on which the Poet, taking a few strides among the shells and pebbles, chanted "The deil's awa' wi' the exciseman." The song was hardly composed, when up came Lewars with his soldiers, on which Burns, putting himself at their head, his pistols in his pockets, and his sword in his hand, waded mid-waist deep into the sea, and carried the smuggler. She was armed. The Poet, whose conduct was much commended, purchased four of her brass guns, and sent them as a present to the French Directory. These, with the letter which accompanied them, were intercepted on their way to France. The suspicions of government were awakened by this breach of decorum, and men in power turned their eyes on the bard, and opened their ears to all his unguarded sayings. That the smuggler was captured chiefly by the bravery of Burns I have been often told; but I never heard it added that he purchased her guns and sent them to the Directory. The biographer seems to have had his information from persons connected with the Excise; but I suspect the story is not more accurate than that, when accused of a leaning to democracy, "he was subjected to no more than perhaps a verbal or private caution to be more circumspect in future."

Burns felt humbled and hurt: he was degraded in his own eyes; he was pushed rudely down from his own little independent elevation, and treated like an imbecile, whose words and actions were to be regulated by the ungentle members of the Board of Excise.—"Have I not," he says to Erskine, "a more precious stake in my country's welfare than the richest dukedom in it? I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of slaves."

It is pleasing to escape with the Poet from the racks of the Board of Excise, and accompany him on his excursions along the banks of the Nith, where he soothed his spirit by composing songs for the publications of Thomson or Johnson. In January, 1793, he wrote "Lord Gregory;" in March, "Wandering Willie" and "Jessie," and in April, "The Poor and Honest Sodger." The first is borrowed in some measure from the exquisite old ballad of "The Lass of Lochroyan," the second is more original:—

"Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was na the blast brought the tear to my ee;
Now welcome the simmer, and welcome my Willie;
The simmer to nature—my Willie to me."

The third was written in honour of the young and the lovely Jessie Staig of Dumfries; and

the fourth was awakened by the prospect of coming war, which ended not till it laid many kingdoms desolate, and put the half of Britain into mourning. In the remarks of Thomson on his songs he was not always acquiescent.—"Give me leave," he says, "to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade; of pathos, sentiment, and point you are a complete judge: but there is a quality more necessary than either in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad, I mean simplicity. Now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are apt to sacrifice to the foregoing." He was as anxious about the purity of Scottish music as about the simplicity of the verse. "One hint," he says to Thomson, "let me give you: whatever Pleyel does, let him not alter one iota of the original Scottish airs; let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules, but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect."

The beauties whom Burns met on Nithside inspired many of the sweetest of his songs: the daughters of his friend, John M'Murdo, were then very young; but they were also very lovely, and had all the elegance and simplicity which poets love. To Jean M'Murdo we owe the ballad of "Bonnie Jean." "I have some thoughts," he says to Thomson, "of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full, but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out. The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M——, daughter of Mr. M—— of D——, one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager." He thought very well of this composition; he asks if the image in the following sweet verse is not original:—

"As in the bosom o' the stream
The moonbeam dwells at dewy e'en:
So trembling, pure, was faithful love
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean."

Her sister Phillis, a young lady equally beautiful and engaging, inspired the Poet also; though he imputes the verses in which he sings of her charms to the entreaty of Clarke, the musician. The first of these lyrics begins:—

"While larks, with little wing,
Fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare."

The other contains that fine verse:—

"Her voice is the song of the morning,
That wakes through the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love."

Ideal loveliness sometimes appeared to him in his solitary wanderings. Autumn he reckoned a propitious season for verse: he wrote thus to Thomson in the month of August:—"I roved out yestreen for a gloamin-shot at the muses; when the muse that presides over the shores of Nith, or, rather, my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following: I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet, simple inspirer that was by my elbow, 'smooth gliding without step,' and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect she has followed me hither, or, at least, makes me occasional visits." The song which this celestial lady of the west awakened commences thus:—

"Come, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder,
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The world's wealth and grandeur."

From lower sources other lyrics of this period are said to have sprung. To the winning looks of a young girl who "brewed gude ale for gentlemen," and was indulgent even to rakish customers, we owe the song of "The golden locks of Anna," of which there are several versions, and none quite decorous, though a clerical biographer of the Bard has said otherwise. A purer song, "The mirk night of December" had its origin in a similar quarter:—

"O May! thy morn was ne'er so sweet,
As the mirk night of December,
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember."

Burns was as ready with his verse to solace the woes of others, as to give utterance to his own. "You, my dear sir," he says to Thomson, "will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice as follows."—The song expressing the sentiments of his friend is that sublime one—

"Had I a cave on some wild distant shore."

The concluding verse, a lady told me, always made her shudder:—

"Falsest of womankind! canst thou declare,
All thy fond plighted vows—fleeting as air?
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury:
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!"

To the influence of thunder, lightning, and rain we owe, we are told, the heroic address of

Bruce at Bannockburn. I abridge the legend of John Syme, who accompanied the Poet on a tour in Galloway:—"I got Burns a grey Highland sheltie to ride on. We dined the first day, July 27, 1793, at Glendinning's of Parton—a beautiful situation on the banks of the Dee. In the evening we walked out and viewed the Alpine scenery around; immediately opposite, we saw Airds, where dwelt Lowe, the author of Mary's Dream. This was classic ground for Burns; he viewed 'the highest hill which rises o'er the source of Dee,' and would have staid till the 'passing spirit' appeared, had we not resolved to reach Kenmore that night. We arrived as 'the Gordons' were sitting down to supper. Here is a genuine baron's seat; the castle, an old building, stands on a large natural moat, and in front the Ken winds for several miles through a fertile and beautiful holm. We spent three days with 'The Gordons,' whose hospitality is of a polished and endearing kind. We left Kenmore and went to Gatehouse. I took him the moor road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark—the winds sighed hollow—the lightnings gleamed—the thunders rolled. The Poet enjoyed the awful scene; he spoke not a word, but seemed rapt in meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall; it poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements rumble their bellyful upon our defenceless heads. We got utterly wet; and, to revenge ourselves, the Poet insisted, at Gatehouse, on our getting utterly drunk. I said that in the midst of the storm, on the wilds of the Kenmore, Burns was rapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army along with Bruce at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner in our ride home from St. Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the Address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell."

Two or three plain words, and a stubborn date or two, will go far, I fear, to raise this pleasing legend into the regions of romance. The Galloway adventure, according to Syme, happened in July; but in the succeding September, the Poet communicated the song to Thomson in these words:—"There is a tradition which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that the old air of 'Hey, tuttie taitie,' was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my *yesternight's evening walk*, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant Royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning. I shewed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it: but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused up my rhyming mania." Currie, to make the letter agree with the legend, altered "Yesternight's evening walk" into "solitary wanderings." Burns was, indeed, a remarkable man, and yielded, no doubt, to strange impulses: but to compose a song

"In thunder, lightning, and in rain,"

intimates such self-possession as few possess. He thus addressed the Earl of Buchan, to whom he sent a copy of the song:—"Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal to the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able, usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her. Liberty! thou art a prize truly; never canst thou be too dearly bought!" The simplicity and vigour of this most heroic of modern lyrics were injured by lengthening the fourth line of each verse to suit the air of Lewie Gordon.

The "Vision of Liberty," and "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled," were to form part of the long-meditated drama of "The Bruce." This the Poet intimated to his friends in conversation, and also in pencil memoranda on one of the blank leaves of Collins's poems. Several lines of verse are scattered among the prose—all shewing on what topic he was musing:—

"Where Bannockburn's ensanguined flood,
Swell'd with mingling hostile blood,
Saw Edward's myriads struck with deep dismay,
And Scotia's troop of brothers win their way.
O glorious deed, to brave a tyrant's band!
O heavenly joy, to free our native land!"

[As the letter of Mr. Syme, written soon after the excursion took place, gives an animated picture of the Poet, by a correct and masterly hand, the remainder is now presented to the reader:—

"From Gatehouse, we went next day to Kirkcudbright, through a fine country. But here I must tell you that Burns had got a pair of *jemmy* boots for the journey, which had been thoroughly wet, and which had been dried in such a manner that it was not possible to get them on again. The brawny Poet tried force, and tore them to shreds. A whiffling vexation of this sort is more trying to the temper than a serious calamity. We were going to Saint Mary's Isle, the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, and the forlorn Burns was discomfited at the thought of his ruined boots. A sick stomach

and a head-ach lent their aid, and the man of verse was quite *accablé*. I attempted to reason with him. Mercy on us, how he did fume and rage! Nothing could reinstate him in temper. I tried various expedients, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I showed him the house of * * * *, across the bay of Wigton. Against * * * *, with whom he was offended, he expectorated his spleen, and regained a most agreeable temper. He was in a most epigrammatic humour indeed! He afterwards fell on humbler game. There is one * * * * * * whom he does not love. He had a passing blow at him:—

'When * * * * *, deceased, to the devil went down,
'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown:
Thy fool's head, quoth Satan, that crown shall wear never,
I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever.'

"Well, I am to bring you to Kirkcudbright along with our poet, without boots. I carried the torn ruins across my saddle in spite of his fulminations, and in contempt of appearances; and what is more, Lord Selkirk* carried them in his coach to Dumfries. He insisted they were worth mending.

"We reached Kirkcudbright about one o'clock. I had promised that we should dine with one of the first men in our country, J. Dalzell. But Burns was in a wild and obstreperous humour, and swore he would not dine where he should be under the smallest restraint. We prevailed, therefore, on Mr. Dalzell to dine with us in the inn, and had a very agreeable party. In the evening we set out for St. Mary's Isle. Robert had not absolutely regained the milkiness of good temper, and it occurred once or twice to him, as he rode along, that St. Mary's Isle was the seat of a Lord; yet that Lord was not an aristocrat, at least in his sense of the word. We arrived about eight o'clock, as the family were at tea and coffee. St. Mary's Isle is one of the most delightful places that can, in my opinion, be formed by the assemblage of every soft, but not tame, object which constitutes natural and cultivated beauty. But, not to dwell on its external graces, let me tell you that we found all the ladies of the family (all beautiful) at home, and some strangers; and, among others, who but Urbani! The Italian sung us many Scottish songs, accompanied with instrumental music. The two young ladies of Selkirk sung also. We had the song of Lord Gregory, which I asked for, to have an opportunity of calling on Burns to recite *his* ballad to that tune. He did recite it, and such was the effect that a dead silence ensued. It was such a silence as a mind of feeling naturally preserves when it is touched with that enthusiasm which banishes every other thought but the contemplation and indulgence of the sympathy produced.

"We enjoyed a most happy evening at Lord Selkirk's. We had, in every sense of the word, a feast, in which our minds and our senses were equally gratified. The Poet was delighted with his company, and acquitted himself to admiration. The lion that had raged so violently in the morning was now as mild and gentle as a lamb. Next day we returned to Dumfries, and so ends our peregrination."]

The Poet now and then inclined to dramatic composition, and hovered between the serious and the comic.—"I have turned my thoughts," he says to Lady Glencairn, "on the drama. I do not mean the stately buskin of the tragic muse. Does not your Ladyship think that an Edinburgh theatre would be more amused with the affectation, folly, and whim of true Scottish growth, than by manners which by far the greatest part of the audience can only know at second-hand?" There is no question that dialogues, characters, and songs, such as Burns could conceive and write, would have been welcome to a northern, and perhaps a southern, audience. His inimitable poem, "The Jolly Beggars" shews dramatic powers of a high order.

Burns, in his earlier days, lent his muse as an auxiliary to the western clergy; nor can it be forgotten that she fought the battle with a boldness which was only endured because the cause was thought to be a pious one. In Nithsdale she became a volunteer in a more worldly strife, and lent her breath to augment or allay the flame of a contested election. When Sir James Johnston of Westerhall, in the year 1790, offered himself as a candidate for the Dumfries district of burghs, he was opposed by Patrick Miller, the younger, of Dalswinton. The former was a good man of an old family, and a determined Tory; the latter was a captain in the army, had the promise of youth upon him, and was a resolute Whig. Burns, through the impulse of his genius, was somewhat of a republican. Old jacobitical prejudices, and the kindness of Graham of Fintray, inclined his feelings towards the Tories; while his connexion with Miller, his regard for M'Murdo, his respect for Staig, and his affection for Syme, all combined to draw him towards the Whigs. His election-ballads of this period shew how prudently he balanced the various interests. The first of these compositions is not inappropriately called "The Five Carlins." The burghs of Dumfries, Lochmaben, Annan, Kirkcudbright, and Sanquhar are cleverly personified in the second verse:—

"There was Maggie by the banks o' Nith,
A dame wi' pride eneugh;
And Marjorie o' the mony Lochs,
A carlin auld and teugh;
And blinkin' Bess o' Annandale,
That dwelt by Solway side;

* This was the same Lord Selkirk, of whom Sir Walter Scott relates an amusing anecdote in his Malagrowther Letters.

And whiskey Jean, that took her gill
In Galloway sae wide;
And black Joan, frae Crichton-Peel,
O' gipsey kith and kin:
Five weighter carlins were na found
The south countrie within."

The Border dames hesitate whether to send "The belted knight" or "The sodger youth to Lunnun town, to bring them tidings:"—

"Then out spak' mim-mou'd Meg of Nith,
And she spak' up wi' pride;
And she wad send the sodger youth,
Whatever might betide."

Not so honest Kirkcudbright:—

"Then whiskey Jean spak' owre her drink—
'Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The auld gudeman o' Lunnun court,
His back's been at the wa';
And mony a friend that kissed his caup
Is now a fremit wight,
But it's ne'er be said o' whiskey Jean—
I'll send the Border Knight.'"

I have heard Sir Walter Scott recite the verse which personifies Lochmaben, and call it "uncommonly happy:"—

"Then slow rose Marjorie o' the Lochs,
And wrinkled was her brow;
Her ancient weed was russet grey,
Her auld Scots blood was true."

"The five Carlins," says one of Burns's biographers, "is by far the best-humoured of these productions." He had not seen the Poet's Epistle on the same election, addressed to Graham of Fintray. The original is before me: the measure was new to Burns: the poem is, I believe, new to the reader. The contest was now decided.—"The Sirens of Flattery," as the Poet said to M'Murdo, "the Harpies of Corruption, and the Furies of Ambition—those infernal deities that preside over the villanous business of politics"—had retired from the field:—

"Fintray, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend o' my muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle's I am?
Come then, wi' uncouth, kintra fleg,
O'er Pegasus I'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him.

"I'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig bears,
Who left the all-important cares
Of princes and their darlin's,
And bent on winning borough-touns,
Came shaking hands wi' wabster loons,
And kissin' barefit carlins.

"Combustion through our boroughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad
Of mad, unmuzzled lions;
As Queensberry's 'buff and blue' unfurl'd,
Bold Westerha' and Hopetoun hurl'd
To every Whig defiance."

The Poet then proceeds to relate how his Grace of Queensberry forsook the contending ranks—

"The unmanner'd dust might soil his star,
Besides, he hated bleeding:"

but left his friends, soft and persuasive, behind, to maintain his cause and Miller's:—

"M'Murdo and his lovely spouse
(The enamour'd laurels kiss her brows!)
Led on the Loves and Graces;
She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, all-conquering, play'd his part
Amang their wives and lasses.

"Craigdarroch led a light-arm'd corps,
Tropes, metaphors, and figures pour
Like Hecla streaming thunder;
Glenriddel, skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs,
And bar'd the treason under."

Assistance, of a kind equally effective in all such contests, it seems, was resorted to:—

"Miller brought up the artillery ranks,
The many-pounders of the banks."

The commotion which ensued, when the contending parties met in the streets of old Dumfries is well described:—

"As Highland crags by thunder cleft,
When light'nings fire the stormy lift,
Hurl down with crashing rattle;
As flames among a hundred woods;
As headlong foam a hundred floods—
Such is the rage of battle!

"The stubborn Tories dare to die,—
As soon the rooted oaks would fly
Before the approaching fellers;
The Whigs come on like Ocean's roar,
When all his wintry billows pour
Against the Buchan-Bullers."

Forms were present, it seems, visible only to the eyes of the inspired: on the Whig side appeared an ominous personage—

"The muffled murderer of Charles."

Purer spirits, those of the Grahams, were seen on the side of the Tories. But neither the wit of woman, the might of man, nor even the presence of the celestials could hinder the defeat of Johnston and the triumph of Miller: the Poet makes his lament:—

"O that my een were flowing burns!
My voice a lioness, that mourns
Her darling cubs' undoing!
That I might weep, that I might cry,
While Tories fall, while Tories fly,
And furious Whigs pursuing!

"Thou, Pitt, shalt rue this overthrow,
And Thurlow growl a curse of woe,
And Melville melt in wailing!
Now Fox and Sheridan rejoice!
And Burke shall sing 'O Prince, arise!
Thy power is all prevailing!'"

"With regard to your poor Bard," says Burns, "he is only a spectator of what he relates. Amid the hurly-burly of politics he

resembles the redbreast in the storm, which shelters itself in the hedge and chirps away securely."

In the four years which intervened between this borough contest and the county election, in which Heron of Kerroughtree was opposed by Gordon of Balmaghie, the temper of Burns seems to have suffered a serious change. In his lyrics he stills sings with gentleness, and with all the delicacy which becomes true love; but in his election lampoons he is fierce and stern, and even venomous. Heron had erected an altar to Independence, and, through the agency, it is said, of Syme, prevailed on the Poet to bring verse to the aid of his cause. The first of these effusions is a parody on "Fye! let us a' to the bridal." The Poet numbers the friends of the candidates, and as he names them gives us a sketch, personal and mental. The portrait of Heron is happy:—

"And there will be trusty Kerroughtree,
Whose honour was ever his law;
If the virtues were pack'd in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'."

The best stanzas are the personal ones; the following verse is very characteristic:—

"And there will be maiden Kilkerran,
And also Barskimmins' guid knight;
And there will be roaring Birtwhistle,
Wha, luckily roars in the right."

He continues his catalogue; he brings "the Maxwells in droves" from the Nithsdale border; the lairds of Terraughty and Carruchan—

"And also the wild Scot of Galloway,
Sodgerin' gunpowder Blair."

In spite of the Poet's song and the exertions of friends, Heron lost his election: he was not, however, daunted: he contested soon after with more success the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright against the Hon. Montgomery Stewart. Burns had still the same belief in the influence of his wit, and was ready with unpremeditated verse. He accordingly imagined himself a pedlar or troggar, and, declaring that his whole stock consisted of

"The broken trade of Broughton,"

proceeded to sell, to all who ventured to buy, the characters of those who supported Stewart. Some of the descriptions of the facetious pedlar are comical enough; he disliked John Stewart, Earl of Galloway, and assailed him, with all the inveteracy of satiric verse:—

"There's a noble earl's
Fame and high renown,
For an auld sang—
It's thought the gudes were stown."

Against the Bushbys he bent the bitterest shafts in his quiver; he allowed them talent: in a former satire he says of one,—

"He has gotten the heart of a Bushby,
But, Lord! what's become of the head?"

He is equally unkind in the present lampoon. Of John Bushby, of Tinwald-downs, the most accomplished of the name, and Maxwell of Cardoness, he says,—

"Here's an honest conscience
Might a prince adorn,
Frae the Downs of Tinwald—
Sae was never worn:
Here's the stuff and lining,
O' Cardoness's head;
Fine for a sodger
A' the wale o' lead."

Muirhead, minister of Urr, had an apple for his crest:—

"Here's armorial bearings
Frae the manse of Urr,
The crest—an auld crab apple,
Rotten at the core."

The minister of Buittle was a Maxwell:—

"Here's that little wadset,
Buittle's scrap o' truth,
Pawn'd in a gin-shop,
Quenching holy drouth."

To conclude these sharp and personal things, the Poet offers for sale the worth and wisdom of Copland of Collieston, and, more curious still,—

"—— Murray's fragments
O' the ten commands."

But customers seem scarce, upon which he exclaims,—

"Hornie's turning chapman,
He'll buy a' the pack."

And so ends his last and bitterest lampoon.—"I have privately," he says to Mr. Heron, "printed a good many copies of both ballads, and have sent them among friends all about the country. You have already, as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the heads of your opponents; and I swear, by the lyre of Thalia, to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter, and fair, candid ridicule!" Heron, on whose side the Poet promised to muster the votaries of mirth, was victorious in the contest; but his return was petitioned against: a Committee of the Commons declared him unduly elected; and, worn in body, and harrassed in mind, he fell ill at York, and died before he reached Scotland.

The wit of Burns, like his native thistle, though rough and sharp, suited the multitude better than more smooth and polished things: he had not the art of cutting blocks with a razor, but dragged his victims rudely along the ground at the tail of his Pegasus. Pointed and elegant satire, while it affected the educated gentlemen against whom it was directed,

would have made no impression on the shepherds and husbandmen whose scorn it was the Poet's wish to excite. The laughter and ridicule which his muse awakened had a local influence only; the satire which drove Dr. Hornbook from the parish, and made Holy Willie think of suicide, had a wider range: the lineaments by which he desired we should know his Stewarts, Maxwells, Murrays, Muirheads, and Bushbys, belonged to private life—were accidents of character or matters of imagination, and pertained not to general nature.

I turn gladly to his lyrics. All his songs bear the impress of nature; he himself tells us in what way he made them.—"Until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing, such as it is, I can never compose for it. My way is this: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming, every now and then, the air with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fire-side of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging, at intervals, on the hind-legs of my elbow chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures as my pen goes on. Seriously, this at home is almost invariably my way." He who desires to compose lyric verse according to the character and measure of an air will find the plan of Burns an useful one. The poet must either chant the tune over to himself, or be under its influence while writing, else he will fail to get the emphatic words to harmonize with the emphatic notes.

In the art of uniting gracefully the music and words, Burns was a great master; the song which he wrote in October, 1793, to the tune of "The Quaker's Wife," echoes the music so truly that the words and air seem to have sprung from his fancy together:—

"Thine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Every pulse along my veins,
Every roving fancy."

The inspiration which produced "Lovely Nancy" came from Edinburgh; that which gave "Wilt thou be my dearie" to the air of the "Sutor's daughter" belonged to Dumfries. The former is written with warmth—the latter with respect. He delighted little in distant modes of salutation, and was prone to imagine the subject of his song beside him, and sharing in his rapture: now and then, however, he exhibited all the polite respect which the school of chivalrous courtship could desire:—

"Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me;
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me."

The Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, inspired the "Banks of Cree,"—less by the charms of her person, than by the music, which is her own composition. Cree is a stream beautiful and romantic:—Cluden is another stream, which runs not smoother down the vale of Dalgonar than it runs in the song of "My bonnie dearie."—

"Hark! the mavis' evening sang,
Sounding Cluden woods amang,
Then a faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie;
We'll gae down by Cluden side,
'Thro' the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly."

When Burns had done searching old-wives' barrels, or galloping under the light of the moon along the sands of Solway in search of smugglers, he retired to the solitude of his own humble dwelling, or to some lonely place, and, imagining beauty to be present, sung of its influence with equal truth and elegance. The Lass of Craigie-burn-wood seems to have been a favourite model for his heroines; he advises Thomson to adopt his song in her praise, and observes—"The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact, is to me what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. I assure you, that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of my best songs. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence, could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your book? No! no! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song—to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe—the very one that, for his own use, was invented by the god of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman, and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!"

The offspring of one of these interviews, real or imaginary, was that fine lyric—"She says she lo'es me best of a'." The lady's portrait is limned with the most exquisite skill; and the last verse contains a landscape such as the

goddess of love might desire to walk in. The lonely valley, the fragrant evening, and the rising moon were frequent witnesses of his poetic rapture :—

"Let others love the city,
And gaudy show at sunny noon,
Gi'e me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon ;
Fair beaming, and streaming
Her silver light the boughs amang,
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang ;
There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows of truth and love,
And say thou lo'es me best of a'."

The influence of this lady's charms was not of short duration.—"On my visit the other day," Burns says, "to my fair Chloris, she suggested an idea which I, in my return from the visit, wrought into the following song :—

'My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair ;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.'"

Having composed another pastoral song in praise of the same lady to the tune of "Rothemurche's Rant," he says—"This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral ; the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If I can catch myself in more than an ordinary propitious moment, I shall write a new 'Craigie-burn-wood' altogether : my heart is much in the theme. The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection ; and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much." The air of "Lumps of Pudding" suggested enjoyments of a less ethereal kind than those arising from beauty. On the 19th of November the frost was dry and keen. The Poet took a morning walk before breakfast, and produced one of his most delightful songs :

"Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp as they're creeping alang
Wi' a cog o' guid swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

"I whiles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought,
But man is a sodger, and life is a faught ;
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch."

When his spirit was in the right mood for song, Burns generally remembered his country : indeed, the glory of Scotland was as dear to his heart as his own fame. This sentiment he gave full utterance to in his song of "Their groves o' sweet myrtle." He muses on the bright summers and perfumed vales of Italy, and then turns to the glen of green breckan, where the burn glimmers under the yellow broom, on whose banks he had held tryste with his Jean. The conclusion which he makes is at once national and affectionate :—

"Though rich is the breeze in their gay sunny valleys,
And cauld Caledonia's blast on the wave,
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they ? the haunt of the tyrant and slave.
The slave's spicy forests and gold-bubbling fountains
The brave Caledonian views with disdain ;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save love's willing fetters—the chains of his Jean."

That the Poet loved his country he has shewn in many a lasting verse ; but when he thought of the splendid possessions of the mean and the sordid, and of the gold descending in showers on the heads of the dull and the undeserving, it required all his poetic philosophy to hinder him from repining. He had sung in other days of the honest joys and fire-side happiness of husbandmen : he now endeavoured to pour the healing balm of verse upon the wounded spirits of the poor, the humble, and the unhappy. The song of "For a' that, and a' that," must have been welcome to many. It flew like wild-fire over the land : the sentiments accorded with the natural desire of man to be free and equal ; and, though not permitted to be sung in the streets of some of our northern borough-towns, it was chanted among the hills and dales by every tongue. Burns introduced it in these words to Thomson : —"A great critic on song, Aikin, says that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song ; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme." There are five verses in all, and every one strikes the balance against rank in favour of poverty :—

"A king can mak' a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he maunna fa' that !
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toil's obscure and a' that ;
The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that !"

Those who judge of the peace of mind and happiness of the Poet by the sentiments of affection and rapture which he expresses so easily and so elegantly in his songs, would imagine that he lived in a sort of paradise, beset by temptation certainly, yet triumphing alike over political hatred and social allurements. His bright outbursts of verse flashed like sunshine amid a winter storm ; they were fever-fits of gladness and joy—came too seldom, and their coming could not be calculated upon. The inquisitorial proceedings of the Commissioners of Excise had a deep share in the ruin of Burns. He was permitted to continue on his seventy pounds a-year, with the chance of rising to the station of Supervisor by seniority ; but the

hope of becoming Collector could no more be indulged—it was a matter of political patronage. From that time forward, something seemed to prey on the Poet's mind: he believed himself watched and marked; he hurried from company into solitude, and from solitude into company; when alone, he was melancholy and desponding—when at table, his mirth was often wild and obstreperous; he had passionate bursts of pathos and unbridled sallies of humour, more than were natural to him.

He had for some time looked on men of rank with jealousy; he now spoke of them in a way that amounted to dislike.—"Let me remind you," he thus writes to David Maculloch, Esq. of Ardwell, June 21, "of your kind promise to accompany me to Kerroughtree; I will need all the friends I can muster; for I am indeed ill at ease whenever I approach your honourables and right honourables." In a letter to his friend Cunningham, he speaks of the conceited dignity which even Scottish lordlings, of seven centuries' standing, display, when they mix accidentally with the many-aproned sons of mechanical life.—"I remember," he says, "in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave: how ignorant are plough-boys!" He says to another correspondent, "In times like these, sir, when our commoners are barely able, by the glimmer of their own twilight understandings, to scrawl a frank, and when our lords are what gentlemen would be ashamed to be, to whom shall a sinking country call for help? To the independent country gentleman! to him who has too deep a stake in his country not to be earnest for her welfare: and who, in the honest pride of man, can view, with equal contempt, the insolence of office, and the allurements of corruption."

Something of the same stern spirit may be found in many places of his correspondence. He seemed to imagine that he could not be in the company of men of rank without having to acknowledge his own inferior condition in life; he did not feel so much as he ought that his genius raised him to an equality with peers, and even princes; or, if he felt it fully, he certainly failed to act up to it. He appeared, too, to apprehend that courtesy on his part might be taken for servility, and he desired to shew, by silent and surly haughtiness, that he might be broken, but would not bend. Even his most intimate friends he now and then put at arms-length; and, if he made a present of a song or a new edition of his poems to any one, he generally recorded it as a gift of affection, and not as an act of homage.—"Will Mr. M'Murdo," he thus writes on the introductory leaf of a new edition of his poems published at this time, "do me the favour to accept of these volumes? a trifling, but sincere, mark of the very high respect I bear for his worth as a man, his manners as a gentleman, and his kindness as a friend. However inferior now or afterwards I may rank as a poet, one honest virtue, to which few poets can pretend, I trust I shall ever claim as mine—to no man, whatever his station in life or his power to serve me, have I ever paid a compliment at the expense of truth."

["There was a great deal of stately toryism," says Lockhart, "at this time in Dumfries, which was the favourite winter retreat of many of the best gentlemen's families of the south of Scotland. Feelings that worked more violently in Edinburgh than in London acquired additional energy still in this provincial capital. All men's eyes were upon Burns. He was the standing marvel of the place; his toasts, his jokes, his epigrams, his songs, were the daily food of conversation and scandal; and he, open and careless, and thinking he did no great harm in saying and singing what many of his superiors had not the least objection to hear and to applaud, soon began to be considered, among the local admirers and disciples of the good King and his great Minister, as the most dangerous of all the apostles of sedition, and to be shunned accordingly."]

The witty boldness of his remarks, and the sarcastic freedom of his opinions in matters both of church and state, it must be confessed, were such as to startle the timid and alarm the devout. He was numbered among those who were possessed with a republican spirit, and all who had any hopes of rising, through political influence, were more willing to find Burns by chance, than seek his company of their own free will. This will account for the coldness with which many of the stately aristocracy of the district regarded him. Mr. David Maculloch, a son of the Laird of Ardwell, has been heard to relate that, on visiting Dumfries one fine evening, to attend a ball given during the week of the races, he saw Burns walking on the south side of the "plain-stanes," while the central part was crowded with ladies and gentlemen, drawn together for the festivities of the night. Not one of them took any notice of the Poet; on which Mr. Maculloch went up to him, took his arm, and wished him to join the gentry.—"Nay, nay, my young friend," he said, "that's all over with me now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:—

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets't wear ony way it will hing.
And casts himself dowie upon the corn-bing

"O! were we young now as we ance hae been,
We should hae been galloping doun on yon green,
And linking it owre the lily-white lea,—
And were na my heart light I wad die."

["It was little in Burns's character," says Lockhart, "to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after

citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner."]

He took his friend home; and while Mrs. Burns, with her sweet and melodious voice, sung one of her husband's latest lyrics, the Poet prepared a bowl of social punch, which they discussed with no little mirth and glee till the hour of the ball arrived. A gentleman, the other day, told me that when he visited Dumfries in the year 1793, he was warned by one or more of the leading men of the county to avoid the society of Burns, who neither believed in religion as the kirk believed, nor took the fashion of his politics from the government.

Burns imputed his disgrace in the Excise to the officers of a regiment then lying in Dumfries, some of whom, he believed, informed the government of his rash language. That he seldom spoke of them but with bitterness and scorn, his correspondence will in some places witness.—"I meant," he thus writes to Mrs. Riddel, "to have called on you yesternight; but, as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon guarding the Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my rustic phiz a part of your box furniture on Tuesday."

His dislike of soldiers found its way into his conversation.—"When I was at Arbigland in 1793," said my accomplished friend Mrs. Basil Montagu, "I was introduced to Burns. His conversation pleased me much, and I saw him often. I was at a ball given by the Caledonian Hunt in Dumfries, and had stood up as the partner of a young officer in the dance, when the whisper of 'There's Burns!' ran through the assembly. I looked round, and there he was—his bright dark eyes full upon me. I shall never forget that look—it was one that gave me no pleasure. He soon left the meeting. I saw him next day. He would have passed me, but I spoke. I took his arm, and said, Come, you must see me home. 'Gladly, madam,' said he; 'but I'll not go down the plain-stanes, lest I have to share your company with some of those epauletted puppies with whom the street is full. Come this way.' We went to Captain Hamilton's. Burns, I remember, took up a newspaper in which some of the letters of a man of genius lately dead were printed. 'This is sad,' he said: 'did I imagine that one-half of the letters which I have written would be published when I die, I would this moment recal them, and burn them without redemption.'" Colonel Jenkinson, who commanded the Cinque-Ports Cavalry, inherited, it would seem, the dislike of his brother soldiers to the Poet; he refused to be introduced to Burns, and never even spoke to him. This was not in keeping with the character of the mild and gentle Earl of Liverpool.

Of his situation as an Exciseman, Burns seldom spoke with much cordiality. He generally introduced it with an apology, and coupled it with something which carried the mind into a new train of thought. "Amid all my hurry of business," he writes to Cunningham, "grinding the faces of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the Excise—making ballads, and then drinking and singing them, I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of friends and fellow-creatures." Two years afterwards he writes with some bitterness:—"I am a miserable hurried devil, and for private reasons, am forced, like Milton's Satan,

'To do what yet, though damn'd, I would abhor.'"

Of his prospects as a revenue officer we have his own account given to Patrick Heron, whom he had aided at the hustings with election squibs.—"I am on the supervisor's list; and, as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of the list, and be appointed, of course. Then a FRIEND might be of service to me in getting me into a part of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about one hundred and twenty to two hundred a-year; but the business is an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector's list, and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies from better than two hundred a-year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list, and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure, with a decent competence, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, nor would not be indebted to, a political friend. At the same time, sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus to hook my dependent situation on your benevolence." This modest vision of literary independence might have been realized had the Poet been prudent, and government liberal.

During this period of the life of Burns, and indeed as early as the close of the year 1792, some of his friends, hearkening to rumours injurious to his name, volunteered counsel or reproof. The wreck of all his speculations and hopes preyed on his mind, and he sought to escape in company from his own reflections. To one of his sensibility of mind, the future loured ominous and dark. The company of a man of his eminence, and wonderful colloquial powers, was much in request; for many loved his genius, and many did not fear the frowns of men in office. Mrs. Dunlop was the first that admonished.—"You must not think, as you

seem to insinuate," replied the Poet, "that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough: but occasional hard-drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned. It is the private parties in the family way, among the hard-drinking gentlemen of this county, that do me the mischief—but even this I have more than half given over." The view which Burns takes of his situation is illustrated by an apology tendered to Mrs. Riddel, after a social bout at her too hospitable table.—"I write you," he says, "from the regions of hell, amid the horrors of the damned. Here am I, laid on a bed of pitiless furze, while an infernal tormentor, wrinkled and cruel, called Recollection, with a whip of scorpions, forbids peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish eternally awake. I wish I could be reinstated in the good opinion of the fair circle, whom my conduct last night so much offended! To the men of the company I will make no apology. Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me, and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt." The Poet erred as others erred.

It must have surprised Burns not a little when William Nicol lifted up his voice and admonished him. The Poet answered, in a manner so cutting and ironical that the irascible pedant was silent ever afterwards.—"O! thou, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! How infinitely is thy rattle-headed, wrong-headed slave indebted to thy super-eminent goodness, that, from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude, thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! From the cave of my ignorance, amid the fogs of my dulness, and pestilential fumes of my political heresies, I look up to thee as doth a toad through the iron-barred lucerne of a pestiferous dungeon to the cloudless glory of a summer's sun! Sorely sighing, in bitterness of soul, I say, when shall my name be the quotation of the wise, and my countenance be the delight of the godly, like the illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills—that father of proverbs and master of maxims—that antipode of folly and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willie Nicol? As for thee, thy thoughts are pure, and thy lips are holy—never did the unhallowed breath of the powers of darkness, and the pleasures of darkness, pollute the sacred flame of thy sky-descended and heaven-bound desires. O! that like thine were the tenor of my life! like thine the tenor of my conversation—then should no friend fear for my strength, no enemy rejoice in my weakness!"

The indifferent success of Nicol seems not to have awed John Syme, who, in his parlour at Ryedale, one afternoon, when the wine flowed, and the Poet was gracious and confidential, took upon him the ungentle task of admonishing his guest.—"I might have spoken daggers," said he, "but I did not mean them: Burns shook to the inmost fibres of his frame, and drew his sword-cane, when I exclaimed, 'What! wilt thou thus, and in mine own house?' The poor fellow was so stung with remorse that he dashed himself down on the floor." Syme told the story, in a rather darker manner, to Sir Walter Scott, who thus related it in one of his criticisms.—"It is a dreadful truth, that, when racked and tortured by the well-meant and warm expostulations of an intimate friend, he started up in a paroxysm of frenzy, and, drawing a sword-cane which he usually wore, made an attempt to plunge it into the body of his adviser—the next instant he was with difficulty withheld from suicide." I have heard a much gentler version of the story: indeed it has several variations, and a biographer has some latitude of choice. This is the last and mildest.—"When I expostulated with Burns," says Syme, "he stared at me, and with such fury of look that, had a sword been in his hand, I am sure he would have run me through." I cannot disprove the story, nor yet can I altogether believe it. The Poet was far more likely, when deeply moved, to draw his sword upon himself than on his friend: but though only, perhaps, a sort of theatrical flourish, the impression on Syme was that he meant mischief. This strange tale induced some to believe that Burns was capable of drawing his sword on the unarmed and defenceless!

Those who are persuaded of that will feel disposed to doubt his courage in a dispute into which he was precipitated, during a drinking bout at a friend's table. "I was, I know," he says, "drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Captain ——— made use of to me, had I nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manner of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not risk the peace and welfare of a wife and children in a drunken squabble. You know that the report of certain political opinions being mine has already brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread last night's business might be interpreted the same way. You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for my welfare with that of waiting, as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, shew him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? 'May our success in the present war be

equal to the justice of our cause.' A toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to."

I know not what the import of those words were at that period: they seem harmless enough now; but a disloyal meaning seems to have been attached to them by some gunpowder captain, who desired to find that practice at home among civilians which he might have obtained from disciplined hands abroad. He seems to have felt that some insult to the government was meant, though he did not exactly understand what, and bit his glove in token of mortal wrath. With the morning, sobriety brought reflection to both sides; and Clarke found little trouble in restoring harmony, which is lucky; for, had a duel ensued, the Poet's biographer would have experienced some difficulty in accounting for it. A handsome pair of pistols, with latchlocks, brass-barrelled and screwed, were at this time given to the Poet by Blair of of Birmingham—his acknowledgments were brief and Burns-like, "Sir, I have received and proved the pistols, and can say of them what I would not say of the bulk of mankind—they are a credit to their maker."

Amid these intemperate quarrels and political heart-burnings, the muse of Burns was not wholly idle; confounded though she no doubt was, with the unmelodious and mingled cries of loyalty and sedition, which filled every borough town, she not only inspired lyrics, tender and harmonious, but added a poem or two to those already published. Among the latter are some felicitous verses to "The Maxwells' veteran chief," the Laird of Terraughty, on his birthday.

"If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May Desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them like Sodom and Gomorrha
In brunstane stoure."

The true spirit of the Poet flashes out also in his "Address to the Tooth-ache:" there are few who cannot attest the accuracy of the description:—

"My curse upon thy venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang,
And through my lugs gi'es mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance,
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

"Of a' the num'rous human dools,
Ill har'st, daft bargains, cutty-stools,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,—
Thou bear'st the gree."

It was now his pleasure to satirize the beautiful Maria Woodleigh—Mrs. Riddel. How this fair and favoured lady happened to move his indignation, is something of a mystery. She was young and accomplished: her verses have more of nature in them than the ordinary lines of lady-poetesses; and her letters are lively and witty, and partake not a little of the sarcastic turn of the Poet's own mind. On introducing her, in 1793, to Smellie, Burns said, "She has one unlucky failing—a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it—and a failing which you will easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself. Where she dislikes or despises, she is as apt to make no more a secret of it than where she esteems and respects." In a rhyme epistle Burns seems to complain that this young beauty paid more respect to others than to himself:—

"I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,
And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze.
The hopeful youth in Scotia's senate bred,
Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head;
Comes, 'mid a string of coxcombs to display,
That veni, vidi, vici! is his way.
The shrinking Bard adown an alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks:
Though there, his heresies in church and state
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate."

Though severe in this poem, for he calls her

"A wit in folly, and a fool in wit,"

he reserves his sharpest satire for a regular monody on her memory: he looks on her grave, and exclaims—

"How cold is that bosom which folly once fir'd,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd!
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tir'd,
How dull is that ear which to flattery so listen'd!"

He refrains from calling on the Loves and Graces to attend, but summons the offspring of Folly to shower over her idle weeds and typical nettles. He then imagines a monument:—

"We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay—
Here vanity strums on her idiot lyre;
There keen Indignation shall dart on her prey,
Which spurning Contempt shall redeem from his ire."

This sarcastic monody was widely circulated; nor was the object of it kept a secret. In the printed copies the name is Eliza—but why should the truth be concealed? It is to the honour of Mrs. Riddel that, though affected at the lampoon at first, she soon relented, and not only forgave the author and received him into favour, but when laid in the grave, and the envious and malicious were making mouths at his fame, she vindicated his aspersed character; and, in an article written with great tenderness and truth, gave us the right image of the man and the poet.

In the following year Britain was threatened by an army of French republicans, and Pitt, in the words of Scott,

"Brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws."

Burns at once enrolled himself in the bands of gentlemen volunteers of Dumfries, though not without opposition from some of the haughty Tories, who demurred about his principles,

which they called democratic. I remember well the appearance of that respectable corps: their odd, but not ungraceful, dress; white kerseymere breeches and waistcoat; short blue coat, faced with red; and round hat, surmounted by a bearskin, like the helmets of our horse-guards; and I remember the Poet also—his very swarthy face, his very ploughman-stoop, his large dark eyes, and indifferent dexterity in the handling of his arms. When those "sons of sedition, Syme, Burns, and Maxwell," as a dull epigram of that day worded it, were admitted into the volunteers, it was not without hope that a heroic song, rivalling "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," might be forthcoming. At a public dinner of the corps, when Burns desired leave to give a toast, the proposal was received with rapturous applause, and something high was hoped for.—"Gentlemen," said he, "may we never see the French, and may the French never see us:" it was drunk, but with a murmur of disapprobation. The poet felt this; and, on going home, wrote that characteristic and truly national song — "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?" He sent it to Jackson's Dumfries Journal—a great number of copies were struck off with the music, in Edinburgh, and widely circulated by the author.

This lyric may be looked on as containing the sentiments of Burns in matters of government: it re-echoed the admirable letter which he addressed to Erskine of Mar, and expresssed what all lovers of Britain felt then, or feel now, on the subject of change and alteration —

"Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the louns beware, sir,
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, sir;
The Nith shall rin to Corsincon,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!

"O! let us not like snarling tykes,
In wrangling be divided,
Till, slap, come in an unco loun,
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!"

This song hit the taste and suited the feelings of the humbler classes, who added it to "The poor and honest Sodger," the "Song of Death," and "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." Hills echoed with it: it was heard in every street, and did more to right the mind of the rustic part of the population than all the speeches of Pitt and Dundas, or of the chosen "Five-and-forty."

At Midsummer, 1794, Burns removed his increasing family from the Bank-Vennel to Mill-hole-brae, where he leased a small house of two stories, plain and humble, but commodious. This street is connected with a wide and respectable one, called the Kirk-gate; is near the bleaching or parade-ground, on the river-side—a favourite walk in the summer mornings and evenings for the citizens of Dumfries. The choice, though respectable enough, was not a poetical one; but the house suited his humble circumstances; and here he arranged his small library, fixed his table, and placed the chair, on whose hind-legs, as he relates, he poised or swung himself, when conceiving his matchless lyrics. Here, too, I have heard his townsmen say, while passing by during a pleasant afternoon, they could see, within the open door, the Poet reading amongst his children: while his wife moved about, set matters in order, and looked to the economy of her household. He was welcomed to his new house by most of his early friends; and the ladies, who sympathized in his fortunes, were among the foremost. Of these, one of the mildest and gentlest was Jessie Lewars, now Mrs. Thomson, the sister of a brother gauger: she felt the genius, and perceived, with Mrs. Burns, the fading looks and declining health of the Poet, and ministered unto him and his young family with all the affection of a daughter.

Burns still continued to correspond with several distinguished persons; the circle of his friends had, however, gradually diminished; the demon of politics made some cold; distance rendered others forgetful; and death had removed one or two to whom he looked up for countenance and support. Riddel of Friars-Carse, in whose company he took much pleasure, died towards the close of 1794: and the last time that Burns was in that neighbourhood, he visited the Hermitage, and wrote on the window,—

"To Riddel, much lamented man,
This ivied cot was dear;
Reader, dost value matchless worth?
This ivied cot revere."

Sickness and death came next to the Poet's own household.—"I have lately," says he to Mrs. Dunlop, "drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever: and long the die spun doubtful, until, after many weeks of a sick bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed, have been before my own door in the street." To the same lady he again writes, as he ever wrote to her, in a strain of serious thought and deep emotion:—"There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father; for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the an-

xious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate—even in all the vigour of manhood, as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock? 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune."

The poet was now and then in a more sportive mood; despondency was lifted from him like a cloud, and his mind lay in sunshine for an hour or so, till reflection darkened it down again. He loved to ponder on the fate of men of genius.—"There is not," he said to Helen Craik, of Arbigland, "among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind; give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility—which, between them, will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary—such as arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflys—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity—and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet."

Burns looked with a mistrusting eye towards future fortune; he saw no outlet for his ambition; poetry had done all for him that poetry was likely to do; and he desired distinction without the means of gratifying it. He sometimes lamented to friends that he could not find his way into the House of Commons; he felt a strong call towards oratory, and all who heard him speak—and some of them were excellent judges—admitted his wonderful quickness of apprehension and readiness of eloquence. He seemed inclined to believe that misfortune had marked him out for her own, and that evil was the only certainty in life.—"In this short, stormy, day of fleeting existence," he observes to Miss Benson, "when you now and then meet with an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you that you will never meet with that character more. On the other hand, if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill run of chances will be so against you that, in the jostlings and turnings of life, pop, at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and will not allow your indignation or contempt one moment's repose."

It cannot be denied that Burns had a fancy fruitful in images of misery—that he looked on earth, and thought the water nought and the ground barren, and believed its surface to be infested with a hundred dolts and scoundrels for one wise and honest man.—"Sunday," says the Poet to Mrs. Riddell, "closes a period of our curst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen till noon—fine employment for a poet's pen! There is a species of the human genus that I call the gin-horse class: what amiable dogs they are! round, and round, and round they go. Mundell's ox that turns his cotton-mill is their exact prototype—without an idea or wish beyond their circle; fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented; while here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a damned melange of fretfulness and melancholy, not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tenement like a wildfinch caught amid the horrors of winter and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied when he foretold: 'And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!'"

A circumstance occurred in the winter of this year to strengthen those gloomy presentiments. Burns, accompanied by his friends, the Richardsons of Dumfries, went to Moffat, a distance of fifteen miles, to spend the day and dine. The morning was rough and cold; the bridge, too, over the Kinnel was tottering and unsafe, and they were obliged to pass the flooded water, which they accomplished not without difficulty and danger; the Poet was in one of his sunniest moods, and laughed alike at storm and stream, and in this temper the party sat down to dinner. "We were all in high spirits," said Archibald Richardson, "and were waited on by a young man not unknown to us, of the name of Glendinning, who said he was to be married in a day or two. This gave a new turn to the conversation. Burns descanted with much humour and uttered many merry jokes on matrimony: the bridegroom smiled, and was pleased to be noticed, and we were in the full tide of enjoyment, when, on removing the last dish, he took a step towards the door, dropped down at our feet, and died without uttering a word. I never saw a man so much affected as the Poet was; the brightness of his eye was gone at once: his face darkened; he rose and he sat down: he looked at my brother and he looked at me; he refused wine, nor did he speak above his breath for the remainder of the evening; he seemed afraid of offending the spirit of the dead. In this mood we journeyed home: and Burns afterwards declared

to me, that the death of Glendinning coloured with sadness some of his best compositions."

During the year 1795, rumour was busy with the name of Burns. Those—and I am sorry to say they were not few—who longed for his halting, whispered about that he was become a lover of low company—a seeker of consolation against imaginary woes, in the bottle; and that in his Howff, as he called the Globe tavern, he forgot what was due to his dignity of mind and his domestic peace; nay, they hesitated not to insinuate that his very genius was sunk and fallen, like Milton's Satan, from its original brightness. Much of this required no refutation. Burns was fallen off, indeed!—not in brightness of genius, but in vigour and health. His walks were shorter, his rests more frequent; his smile had something of melancholy in it, and amid the sons of men he looked like one marked out for an early grave. My friend, Mrs. Hyslop—daughter of Mr. Geddes of Leith—happened to meet him one day in the streets of Dumfries, and was affected by his appearance. He stooped more than was his wont; his dress, about which he used to be rather nice, was disordered and shabby, and he bore on his face the stamp of internal sorrow. The meeting was cordial and warm; on parting he wrung her brother, who accompanied her, earnestly by the hand, turned half away from him, and said, "I am going to ruin as fast as I can; the best I can do is to go consistently."

At this period some of the lofty aristocracy of the country shunned the Poet's company, not for his conduct as a man, but for his sentiments as a politician. That Burns was frequently in the company of the tradesmen of Dumfries, and joined in their socialities, is perfectly true; his small income hindered him from seeking loftier society: he who has only a shilling in his pocket must be contented with humble friends. But it is untrue that this was the only company he kept; some of the first gentlemen in the land were still his friends; he was a welcome and an invited guest at their tables, and might be seen walking with their wives and their daughters, when his health enabled him to go abroad.

The best answer, which such malevolent representations could receive, has been given by Gray and Findlater; both of these gentlemen lived near the Poet; they were wise and sensible men, and incapable of misrepresentation.—"It came under my own view professionally," said the former, "that Burns superintended the education of his children with a degree of care that I have never seen surpassed. In the bosom of his family he spent many an hour, directing the studies of his eldest son, a boy of uncommon talents. I have frequently found him explaining to this youth, then not more than nine years of age, the poets from Shakspeare to Grey, or storing his mind with examples of heroic virtue, as they live in the pages of the English historians. I would ask any person of common candour, if employments like these are consistent with habitual drunkenness? It is not denied that he sometimes mingled with society unworthy of him; he was of a social and convivial nature. In his morning hours, I never saw him like one suffering from the effects of last night's intemperance." Almost the last words that Gray uttered to me before he went to India were about Burns:—"I was sometimes surprised," he said, "at the vigour and elegance of Robert's versions from the Latin. I told him he got help; he looked up in my face and said, 'Yes, my father helps me.'"

The testimony of Findlater is equally decisive:—"My connexion with Burns," he observed, "commenced immediately after his admission to the Excise, and continued to the hour of his death. In all that time the superintendence of his behaviour, as an officer of the revenue, was a branch of my especial province, and I was not an inattentive observer of the general conduct of a man and a Poet so celebrated by his countrymen. He was exemplary in his attention, and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance. It was not till near the latter end of his days that there was any falling off in this respect; and this was well accounted for by the pressure of disease and accumulating infirmities. I will further avow that I never saw him—which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more so, almost every day, after he removed to Dumfries—in hours of business, but he was quite himself, and capable of discharging the duties of his office; nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon. I have seen Burns in all his various phases—in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family. Indeed, I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, and I never beheld anything like the gross enormities with which he has been charged. That when he sat down in the evening with friends whom he liked he was apt to prolong the social hours beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than as attentive and affectionate in a high degree."

The recollections of my friend Dr. Copland Hutchison are equally in the Poet's favour:—"I lived in Dumfries," he observed in a late conversation, "during the whole period that Burns lived there; I was much about, and saw him almost daily, but I never saw him even the worse of liquor; he might drink as much as other men, but certainly not more."

Professor Walker, a gentleman of unquestioned candour, was two days in the Poet's company, during November, 1795.—"I went to

Dumfries," he says, "and called upon him early in the forenoon. I found him in a small house; he was sitting on a window-seat, reading, with the doors open, and the family arrangements going on in his presence, and altogether without that appearance of snugness and seclusion which a studious man requires. After conversing with him for some time, he proposed a walk, and promised to conduct me through some of his favourite haunts. We accordingly quitted the town, and wandered a considerable way up the beautiful banks of the Nith. Here he gave me an account of his latest productions, and repeated some satirical ballads which he had composed; these I thought inferior to his other pieces, though they had some lines in which vigour compensated for coarseness. He repeated also a fragment of an Ode to Liberty, with marked and peculiar energy, and shewed a disposition, which was easily repressed, to make political remarks."

To this picture of the first day I shall add a sketch of the second:—"On the next morning I returned with a friend, and we found him ready to pass part of the day with us at the inn. On this occasion I did not think him so interesting as he had appeared at his outset. His conversation was too elaborate; in his praise and censure he was so decisive as to render a dissent from his judgment difficult to be reconciled with the laws of good breeding. His wit was not more licentious than it is in higher circles, though I thought him rather unnecessarily free in the avowal of his excesses. When it began to grow late he shewed no disposition to retire, but called for fresh supplies of liquor with a freedom which might be excusable, as we were in an inn, and no condition had been made, though it might have been inferred—had the inference been welcome—that he was to consider himself as our guest: nor was it till he saw us worn out that he departed, about three in the morning, with a reluctance that probably proceeded less from being deprived of our company than from being confined to his own. I discovered in his conduct no errors which I had not seen in men who stood high in the favour of society. He on this occasion drank freely, without being intoxicated; a circumstance from which I concluded, not only that his constitution was still unbroken, but that he was not addicted to solitary cordials. Had he tasted liquor in the morning he must have easily yielded to the excess of the evening." A grave Professor was not likely to speak in commendation of the late hours and deep socialities practised by the Dumfries-shire topers; men in those days seldom quitted the bottle or the punch-bowl before day-light came to shew the way home; and it was likely that Burns imagined he was asserting a proper independence, when he desired more liquor and consulted his own inclination.

New-year's-day, 1796, found the Poet under a triple visitation of poverty, domestic sorrow, and ill health: it is not known that he uttered any complaints; if he desired life it was less for himself than for his wife and children. There is something to me inexpressibly touching in the request which he made to his collector and pay-master, Mitchell, for the humble stipend then due, and without which he would have been unable to meet the new year's morning. To render it more acceptable he made it in rhyme:—

"Friend of the Poet, tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake! alake! the meikle deil,
Wi' a' his witches,
Are at it, skelpin' jig and reel,
In my poor pouches!"

To this request, which it seems he hesitated to make, Burns added a mournful postscript concerning his health:—

"Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket
Grim loon! he gat me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turned a neuk."

His illness now alarmed his friends. Maxwell, with equal skill and kindness of heart, attended him carefully: De Peyster, his colonel, a rough veteran, and a rhymer if not a poet, visited him and made frequent inquiries: the ailing man was touched with these attentions, and thanked his commander in verse. I shall transcribe a couple of stanzas—he is always his own best biographer:—

"My honoured colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal:
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus, pill,
And potion glasses."

This world, he goes on to say, would be plea sant, if care and sickness would stay away, and fortune favour worth and merit according to their deservings—the strain concludes sadly:—

"Dame Life, though fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems, and frippery deck her;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Ay wavering like the willow-wicker,
'Tween guid and ill."

In his lines to Mitchell, Burns seems to acknowledge—for he never spared himself—that he owed some of his illness to folly: in his verses to De Peyster he intimates his meaning more clearly, and blames, but good-humouredly, the spirit of evil—

"First shewing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines, and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft."

Thomson began to feel alarm at the ominous silence of the Poet, and inquired the cause;

the answer was written in April.—"Alas! I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again. 'By Babel's streams I've sat and wept,' almost ever since I wrote you last: I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say, with poor Fergusson—

'Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?'"

The inquiries of Thomson induced his fancy once more to take flight in song: Burns had formerly, in health, sung of beauty with

"Cheeks like apples, which the sun had rudded,"

and adorned with smiles: he looked around, and seeing Jessie Lewars watching over him, with anxiety on her brow and tenderness in her eyes, he honoured her with one of his happiest songs; it bears her name, and is the last perfect offspring of his muse. In all the compass of verse there is nothing more touching than this exquisite stanza:—

"Altho' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside."

As the same young lady was moving with a light foot about the house, lest she should disturb him, the Poet took up a crystal goblet which contained wine and water for moistening his lips, and wrote on it with a diamond,—

"Fill me with the rosy wine:
Call a toast—a toast divine;
Give the Poet's darling flame,
Lovely Jessie be the name;
Then thou mayest freely boast
Thou hast given a peerless toast."

Though now and then well enough to walk out in the sunshine, or visit a neighbour, Burns was no longer able to do his duties in the Excise. Mr. Stobie,* a young expectant in the Excise, kindly undertook to perform them for him, else the Poet might have starved; for it is the rule—and a cruel and unjust one—in the Customs, to give but half-pay to the sick or those unable to work. When the birth-day of the king came, his friend Mrs. Riddel, desirous of soothing or pleasing him, requested him to accompany her to the assembly held in the evening, and shew his loyalty.—"I am," said he, "in such miserable health as to be incapable of shewing my loyalty in any way. Racked as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam,—'Come, curse me, Jacob; and come defy me Israel!' So say I—come, curse me that east wind, and come, defy me the north! Would you have me, in such circumstances, copy you out a love-song? I will not be at the ball. Why should I? 'Man delights not me, nor woman neither.' Can you supply me with the song, 'Let us all be unhappy together?' do so, and oblige *le pauvre* miserable, Robert Burns."

Well or ill, his heart was still with the muse. He began to feel that he was soon to pass from among the living, and became solicitous about his fame.—"I have no copies of the songs I sent you," he says to Thomson, "and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so, when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for the originals, or copies. I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise." This request refers to those lyrics hitherto unpublished, of which Thomson had nearly fifty; it is needless to say that this revisal the Poet did not live to perform.

To Johnson, proprietor of the Museum, Burns wrote on the 4th of July,—"You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy upon me. Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more—though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow-consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt not, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well nigh reached his middle career, and will turn over the poet to far other and more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit or the pathos of sentiment. However, hope is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can." His sun of life was descending to the setting.

The summer warmth wrought no change in his suffering frame; and he was advised, about the close of June, to go into the country. I believe Burns followed his own feelings rather than the counsel of his physician, when he took up his residence at a lonely place called The Brow, on the shore of Solway in Annandale, resolved to try the effects of bathing in the sea—a remedy recommended in almost all cases by our rustic doctors. It happened at that time that Mrs. Riddel was residing near The Brow; she was herself ailing. On hearing of the Poet's arrival, she invited him to dinner, and

* [Mr. Chambers recollects this amiable man in the station of an ordinary exciseman at Pinkie salt-pans, about the year 1817. The only fragment of his conversation respecting Burns, which he can now recal, is what he said of the Poet's singing powers. "He sang like a nightingale," said Stobie (meaning that he had no reluctance nor hesitation in singing): "but he had the voice of a boar."]

sent her carriage for him to the cottage where he lodged, as he was unable to walk.

"I was struck," said she, "with his appearance on entering the room: the stamp of death was impressed on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first words were, 'Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?' I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest, and that I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. (I was then in a poor state of health.) He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his usual sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present state, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death, with firmness as well as feeling, as an event likely to happen very soon, and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in the hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. He shewed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him, to the injury of his future reputation; that letters and verses, written with unguarded freedom, would be handed about by vanity or malevolence, when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, nor prevent malice or envy from pouring forth their venom to blast his fame. The conversation was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I had seldom seen his mind greater, or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and dejection, I could not disguise, damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed willing to indulge. We parted about sun-set on the evening of the 5th of July; the next day I saw him again, and we parted—to meet no more!"

The house which he occupied at The Brow is at a little distance from the sea, and its windows opened towards the west; at one of these it was the Poet's practice to sit during the afternoon, looking at the visiters as they passed, and at the sun as it descended on the distant hills. One fine evening two young ladies called to see him: the sun streamed brightly on him through the glass, when one of them (Miss Craig—afterwards Mrs. Henry Duncan) was afraid the light might be too much for him, and rose, with the view of letting down the window-blinds. Burns immediately guessed what she meant to do, and, regarding the young lady with a look of great benignity, said, "Thank you, my dear, for your kind attention; but oh! let him shine!—he will not shine long for me!"

With how little advantage to his health he bathed in the Solway may be gathered from his letter to Cunningham, of the 7th July.—"Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the Bard will soon be heard among you no more! For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bedfast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You would actually not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled!—but I can no more on this subject.—I beg of you to use your utmost interest, and that of all your friends, to move our Commissioners of Excise to grant me my full salary. If they do not grant it, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poete*—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger." The Excise refused this last humble boon.

On the 10th of July, he thus writes to his brother Gilbert:—"It will be no very pleasing news to you to be told that I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better. An inveterate rheumatism has reduced me to such a state of debility, and my appetite is so totally gone, that I can scarcely stand on my legs. God help my wife and children! If I am taken from their head, they will be poor indeed. Remember me to my mother." To his wife he writes,—"No flesh nor fish can I swallow; porridge and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear by Miss Jessie Lewars that you are all well. My very best compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday. Your affectionate husband, ROBERT BURNS." He likewise wrote to James Armour of Mauchline, his father-in-law, saying that his dear wife was nigh her confinement; that his days were numbered, for he felt himself dying, and requesting that Mrs. Armour might hasten to Dumfries, to speak and look comfort to them.

Burns had formerly, when his hopes were higher and his health good, made it almost a quarrel with Thomson that he had sent him five pounds in acknowledgment of his songs. His situation, in all respects, was changed now; he had to bend his proud heart to beg from the Excise the continuance of his pay; and he had to lay himself under obligations to Stobie, who generously performed his duties gratis. He had no money in his pocket, and little food in his house; and, to aggravate these evils, one Williamson, to whom he owed the price of the cloth of his volunteer regimentals, threatened to sue him for the amount. The Poet was alarmed at this; and on the 12th of July wrote to Thomson, saying, "After all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel haberdasher, to whom

I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half-distracted." To render this very modest request more acceptable, the Poet, ill as he was, tried his hand on the air of Rothemurche; and, allowing his mind to wander to scenes of former happiness, and to one whom he had loved, composed the last song he was to measure in this world, beginning, "Fairest maid on Devon banks." It is written in a character indicating the feeble state of his bodily strength.

Thomson instantly complied with the request of Burns: he borrowed a five-pound note* from Cunningham, and sent it, saying he had made up his mind to enclose the identical sum the Poet had asked for when he received his letter. For this he has been sharply censured; and his defence is that he was afraid of sending more, lest he should offend the pride of the Poet, who was uncommonly sensitive in pecuniary matters. A better defence is Thomson's own poverty; only one volume of his splendid work was then published; his outlay had been beyond his means, and very small sums of money had come in to cover his large expenditure. Had he been richer, his defence would have been a difficult matter. When Burns made the stipulation, his hopes were high, and the dread of hunger, or of the jail, was far from his thoughts; he imagined that it became genius to refuse money in a work of national importance. But his situation grew gloomier as he wrote; he had lost nearly his all in Ellisland, and was obliged to borrow small sums, which he found a difficulty in repaying. That he was in poor circumstances was well known to the world; and, had money been at Thomson's disposal, a way might have been found of doing the Poet good by stealth; he sent five pounds, because he could not send ten; and it would have saved him from some sarcastic remarks, and some pangs of heart, had he said so at once.

On the same day that Burns wrote to Thomson he also wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, and to his cousin, James Burness, of Montrose. To the latter he said, "A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, believes that I am dying, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O, James! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me! Alas! I am not used to beg! O, do not disappoint me!—save me from the horrors of a jail!" To Mrs. Dunlop he said, "I have written to you so often without receiving any answer that I would not trouble you again but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that 'bourne whence no traveller returns.' Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul; your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell." The Poet's cousin instantly sent the ten pounds, though at that time far from rich: he afterwards sent five pounds more, and generously offered to take Robert and educate and bring him up like one of his own sons: Mrs. Dunlop also wrote; and, alarmed with the despondency of the Poet's last letter, assured him of her undiminished esteem, and that his family might depend on her friendship: it is needless so say how amply this was fulfilled.

These are supposed, by some, to be the last words which he wrote: there are yet later, and of higher import and meaning. As the day of life darkened down, Burns began to prepare for the change: he remembered that he had written many matters, both in verse and prose, of a nature licentious as well as witty. He sought to reclaim them, and in some instances succeeded; he had, when his increasing difficulties were rumoured about, received an offer for them from a bookseller; but he spurned at fifty pounds in comparison with his fair fame, and refused to sell or sanction them. That such things were scattered abroad troubled him greatly; he reflected that the mean and the malignant might rake them together; and, quoting them against him, triumph over his fame, and trample on his dust. Perhaps he felt some consolation in believing that his other works transcended these so far in talent and in number that the grosser would be weighed down, cast aside, and forgotten. What troubled him most was the imputations of disloyalty to his country which had been thrown upon his character: he trembled lest he should be represented as one who desired to purchase republican license at the price of foreign invasion. He had defended his character and motives in a letter, uncommonly manly and eloquent, to Erskine of Mar; but he had requested it to be burnt, and was not aware that it was fortunately preserved. He still retained the letter in his memory, and it was the last act of his pen to write it out fair, and with comments, into his memorandum-book. Burns thus gave his deliberate—I might say dying—sanction to that important letter; it makes statements which cover the Board of Excise and the British government of that day with eternal shame, and contains sentiments honourable to

* [It appears from the inventory of Burns's effects that it was a Banker's draft which was sent by Mr. Thomson.]

the head and heart of the Poet—such as should live in the bosom of every Briton.

"You have been misinformed," says Burns, "as to my final dismission from the Excise—I am still in the service. Indeed, but for the exertions of Mr. Graham of Fintray, who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. In my defence to their accusations, I said that, whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain I abjured the idea; that a constitution, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory;—that, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally or as an author, in the present business of reform; but that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious constitution, and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended. My last remark gave great offence, and Mr. Corbet was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—'That my business was to act, *not to think*.'" A nobleman connected with the Pitt administration, to whom I repeated these last words, smiled bitterly and said—"They are as absurd as they are cruel."

Having removed the veil of mystery which hung too long over this transaction, and established himself as a lover of his country with all who know what patriotism is, Burns proceeds to discuss his hopes of fame, and his character as a man and a poet.—"The partiality of my countrymen," he observes, "has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the Poet I have avowed manly and independent sentiments which, I trust, will be found in the man. My honest fame is my dearest concern, and a thousand times I have trembled at the idea of those degrading epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity exulting in his hireling paragraphs—'Burns, notwithstanding the fanfaronade of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view, and to public estimation, as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind.'—In your hands, sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. Burns was a poor man by birth, and an exciseman by necessity; but—I *will* say it—the sterling of his honest worth no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind oppression might bend, but could not subdue." These sentiments need no comment: in them we hear the voice of Burns speaking from the grave, desiring justice rather than mercy.

Sea-bathing relieved for awhile the pains in the Poet's limbs; but his appetite failed; he was oppressed with melancholy; he looked ruefully forward, and saw misery and ruin ready to swallow his helpless household up. He grew feverish on the 14th of July; felt himself sinking, and longed to be at home. He returned on the 18th in a small spring cart; the ascent to his house was steep, and the cart stopped at the foot of the Mill-hole-brae; when he alighted he shook much, and stood with difficulty; he seemed unable to stand upright. He stooped, as if in pain, and walked tottering towards his own door; his looks were hollow and ghastly, and those who saw him then never expected to see him in life again.

It was soon spread through Dumfries that Burns had returned from The Brow much worse that when he went away, and it was added that he was dying. The anxiety of the people, high and low, was very great. I was present and saw it. Wherever two or three were together their talk was of Burns, and of him alone. They spoke of his history, of his person, and of his works—of his witty sayings and sarcastic replies, and of his too early fate, with much enthusiasm, and sometimes with deep feeling. All that he had done, and all that they had hoped he would accomplish, were talked of: half-a-dozen of them stopped Dr. Maxwell in the street, and said, "How is Burns, Sir?" He shook his head, saying, "he cannot be worse," and passed on to be subjected to similar inquiries farther up the way. I heard one of a group inquire, with much simplicity, "Who do you think will be our poet now?"

Though Burns now knew he was dying, his good humour was unruffled, and his wit never forsook him. When he looked up and saw Dr. Maxwell at his bed-side,—"Alas!" he said, "what has brought you here? I am but a poor crow, and not worth plucking." He pointed to his pistols, those already mentioned, the gift of their maker, Blair of Birmingham, and desired that Maxwell would accept of them, saying they could not be in worthier keeping, and he should never more have need of them. This relieved his proud heart from a sense of obligation. Soon afterwards he saw Gibson, one of his brother-volunteers, by the bed-side, with tears in his eyes. He smiled and said,—"John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me!'

His household presented a melancholy spec-

tacle: the Poet dying; his wife in hourly expectation of being confined: four helpless children wandering from room to room, gazing on their miserable parents, and but too little of food or cordial kind to pacify the whole or soothe the sick. To Jessie Lewars, all who are charmed with the Poet's works are much indebted: she acted with the prudence of a sister and the tenderness of a daughter, and kept desolation away, though she could not keep disease.—"A tremor," says Maxwell, "pervaded his frame; his tongue, though often refreshed, became parched; and his mind, when not roused by conversation, sunk into delirium. On the second and third day after his return from The Brow, the fever increased and his strength diminished. On the fourth day, when his attendant, James Maclure, held a cordial to his lips, he swallowed it eagerly—rose almost wholly up—spread out his hands—sprang forward nearly the whole length of the bed—fell on his face and expired.* He was thirty-seven years and seven months old, and of a form and strength which promised long life; but the great and inspired are often cut down in youth, while

"Villains ripen gray with time."

I went to see him laid out for the grave; several elder people were with me. He lay in a plain unadorned coffin, with a linen sheet drawn over his face; and on the bed and around the body, herbs and flowers were thickly strewn, according to the usage of the country. He was wasted somewhat by long illness; but death had not increased the swarthy hue of his face, which was uncommonly dark and deeply marked—his broad and open brow was pale and serene, and around it his sable hair lay in masses, slightly touched with grey. The room where he lay was plain and neat, and the simplicity of the Poet's humble dwelling pressed the presence of death more closely on the heart than if his bier had been embellished by vanity and covered with the blazonry of high ancestry and rank. We stood and gazed on him in silence for the space of several minutes—we went, and others succeeded us—not a whisper was heard.

On the evening of the 25th of July, the remains of the Poet were removed from his house to the Town Hall, where they lay in state until the next morning.

His interment took place on the 26th of July; nor should it be forgotten, in relating the Poet's melancholy story, that, while his body was borne along the street, his widow was taken in labour and delivered of a son, who survived his birth but a short while. The leading men of the town and neighbourhood appeared as mourners; the streets were lined by the Angus-shire Fencibles, and the Cinque Ports Cavalry, and his body was borne by the Volunteers, to the old kirk-yard, with military honours. The multitude who followed amounted to many thousands. It was an impressive and a mournful sight; all was orderly and decorous. The measured steps, the military array, the colours displayed, and the muffled drum—I thought then, and think now—had no connexion with a Pastoral Bard. I mingled with the mourners. On reaching the grave into which the Poet's body was about to descend, there was a pause among them, as if loth to part with his remains; and when the first shovel-full of earth sounded on the coffin-lid, I looked up, and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The Volunteers justified the surmise of Burns by three ragged and straggling volleys: the earth was heaped up, the green sod laid over him, and the vast multitude melted silently away. The day was a fine one, the sun was almost without a cloud, and not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this, not from any concurrence in the common superstition that 'happy is the corpse which the rain pours on,' but to confute the pious fraud of a religious writer, who intimated that Heaven expressed its wrath at the interment of a profane poet, in thunder, in lightning, and in rain.

The body of Burns was not, however, to remain long in its place. To suit the plan of a rather showy mausoleum, his remains were removed into a more commodious spot of the same kirk-yard, on the 5th of June, 1815. The coffin was partly dissolved away; but the dark curling locks of the Poet were as glossy, and seemed as fresh, as on the day of his death. In the interior of the structure stands a marble monument, embodying, with little skill or grace, that well-known passage in the dedication to the gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt:—"The poetic Genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough—and threw her inspiring mantle over me." The Poet's dust has been a second time disturbed. At the funeral of his widow, April 1834, two or three believers in the romantic science of craniology disinterred his skull, applied their compasses, and satisfied themselves that Burns had capacity equal to the composition of "Tam-o-Shanter," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and "To Mary in Heaven." "O for an hour of Burns for these men's sake!" exclaims a kindred spirit, "were there a witch of Endor in Scotland, it would be an act of comparative piety in her to bring up his spirit:

* [Mr. Chambers says the author must have been misinformed when he represented the Poet as rising at the last moment, and springing to the bottom of the bed. "The poor Bard was far indeed from being in a condition to make any violent movement. Though he had been muttering in delirium for some time before, he died in a state of perfect calmness—the calmness of exhaustion. His eldest son, who was in the room at the moment, reports the mournful event as having thus taken place; and we cannot well see how he could be mistaken."—]

to stigmatize them in verses that would burn for ever would be a gratification for which he might think it worth while to be thus brought again upon earth." All mankind have heard of the malediction which Shakspeare utters from his monument, and of the dread which came upon the boors of Stratford-on-Avon, as they presumed to gaze on his dust: no such fears, however, fell upon the craniologists of Dumfries: the clock struck one as they touched the dread relic: they tried their hats upon the head, and found them all too little; and, having made a mould, they deposited the skull in a leaden box, "carefully lined with the softest materials," and returned it once more to the hallowed ground! Here, as to a shrine, flock annually vast numbers of pilgrims; many, very many, are from America; not a few from France and Germany; and the list-book contains the names of the most eminent men of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Though Burns died poor, the generous activity of his friends and admirers, among whom Syme, Maxwell, and Macmurdo, were active and liberal, placed his young widow and helpless children beyond the reach of want. Currie, the chief benefactor of all, wrote the Poet's life, and edited his works: Lord Sidmouth placed his eldest son Robert in the Stamp-office: Lord Panmure sent fifty pounds annually to his widow, till her sons were able to interpose and take the pious duty on themselves; and William Nicol and James Glencairn went out to India on cadetships, one of which was bestowed by the generous Sir James Shaw. Francis Wallace died young, so did Maxwell: the street in which the Poet died was named Burns-street: the walks in which he mused were remembered and respected, and his widow lived and died in the house which he had occupied. She had acted, throughout her long life, with equal prudence and propriety; lived in comfort, and, aided by the counsel and advice of her younger brother, a London merchant of great respectability, preserved her affairs in excellent order, and was enabled to save a small sum out of her annual income.

[Soon after the death of Burns, the following article appeared in the Dumfries Journal. It is from the elegant pen of a lady already alluded to in the course of these memoirs,* whose exertions for the family of our Bard, in the circles of literature and fashion in which she moves, have done her so much honour.

"The attention of the public seems to be much occupied at present with the loss it has recently sustained in the death of the Caledonian Poet, Robert Burns—a loss calculated to be severely felt throughout the literary world, as well as lamented in the narrower sphere of private friendship. It was not, therefore, probable that such an event should be long unattended with the accustomed profusion of posthumous anecdotes and memoirs which are usually circulated immediately after the death of every rare and celebrated personage. I had, however, conceived no intention of appropriating to myself the privilege of criticising Burns's writings and character, or of anticipating on the province of a biographer.

"Conscious, indeed, of my own inability to do justice to such a subject, I should have continued wholly silent, had misrepresentation and calumny been less industrious; but a regard to truth, no less than affection for the memory of a friend, must now justify my offering to the public a few at least of those observations which an intimate acquaintance with Burns, and the frequent opportunities I have had of observing equally his happy qualities and his failings for several years past, have enabled me to communicate.

"It will actually be an injustice done to Burns's character, not only by future generations and foreign countries, but even by his native Scotland, and perhaps a number of his contemporaries, that he is generally talked of, and considered, with reference to his poetical talents *only:* for the fact is, even allowing his great and original genius its due tribute of admiration, that poetry (I appeal to all who have had the advantage of being personally acquainted with him) was actually not his *forte.* Many others, perhaps, may have ascended to prouder heights in the region of Parnassus, but none certainly ever outshone Burns in the charms, the sorcery, I would almost call it, of fascinating conversation, the spontaneous eloquence of social argument, or the unstudied poignancy of brilliant repartee; nor was any man, I believe, ever gifted with a larger portion of the '*vivida vis animis.*' His personal endowments were perfectly correspondent to the qualifications of his mind—his form was manly — his action, energy itself — devoid in a great measure perhaps of those graces, of that polish, acquired only in the refinement of societies where in early life he could have no opportunities of mixing; but where such was the irresistible power of attraction that encircled him, though his appearance and manners were always peculiar, he never failed to delight and to excel. His figure seemed to bear testimony to his earlier destination and employments. It seemed rather moulded by nature for the rough exercises of agriculture than the gentler cultivation of the Belles Lettres. His features were stamped with the hardy character of independence, and the firmness of conscious, though not arrogant, pre-eminence; the animated expressions of countenance were almost peculiar to himself; the rapid lightnings of his eye were always the harbingers of some flash of genius, whether they darted the fiery glances of insulted and indignant superiority, or beamed with the im-

[* Mrs. Riddel of Woodlee-Park.]

passioned sentiment of fervent and impetuous affections. His voice alone improved upon the magic of his eye: sonorous, replete with the finest modulations, it alternately captivated the ear with the melody of poetic numbers, the perspicuity of nervous reasoning, or the ardent sallies of enthusiastic patriotism. The keenness of satire was, I am almost at a loss whether to say his *forte* or his foible; for though nature had endowed him with a portion of the most pointed excellence in that dangerous talent, he suffered it too often to be the vehicle of personal and sometimes unfounded animosities. It was not always that sportiveness of humour, that 'unwary pleasantry,' which Sterne has depicted with touches so conciliatory, but the darts of ridicule were frequently directed as the caprice of the instant suggested, or as the altercations of parties and of persons happened to kindle the restlessness of his spirit into interest or aversion. This, however, was not invariably the case: his wit (which was no unusual matter indeed) had always the start of his judgment, and would lead him to the indulgence of raillery uniformly acute, but often unaccompanied with the least desire to wound. The suppression of an arch and full-pointed *bon-mot*, from a dread of offending its object, the sage of Zurich very properly classes as a virtue *only to be sought for in the calendar of saints;* if so, Burns must not be too severely dealt with for being rather deficient in it. He paid for his mischievous wit as dearly as any one could do. "'Twas no extravagant arithmetic,' to say of him, as was said of Yorick, that 'for every ten jokes he got a hundred enemies;' but much allowance will be made by a candid mind for the splenetic warmth of a spirit whom 'distress had spited with the world,' and which, unbounded in its intellectual sallies and pursuits, continually experienced the curbs imposed by the waywardness of his fortune. The vivacity of his wishes and temper was indeed checked by almost habitual disappointments, which sat heavy on a heart that acknowledged the ruling passion of independence, without having ever been placed beyond the grasp of penury. His soul was never languid or inactive, and his genius was extinguished only with the last spark of retreating life. His passions rendered him, according as they disclosed themselves in affection or antipathy, an object of enthusiastic attachment, or of decided enmity; for he possessed none of that negative insipidity of character whose love might be regarded with indifference, or whose resentment could be considered with contempt. In this, it should seem, the temper of his associates took the tincture from his own; for *he* acknowledged in the universe but two classes of objects, those of adoration the most fervent, or of aversion the most uncontrollable; and it has been frequently a reproach to him that, unsusceptible of indifference, often hating where he ought only to have despised, he alternately opened his heart, and poured forth the treasures of his understanding to such as were incapable of appreciating the homage; and elevated to the privileges of an adversary some who were unqualified in all respects for the honour of a contest so distinguished.

"It is said that the celebrated Dr. Johnson professed to 'love a good hater'—a temperament that would have singularly adapted him to cherish a prepossession in favour of our Bard, who perhaps fell but little short even of the surly doctor in this qualification, as long as the disposition to ill-will continued; but the warmth of his passions was fortunately corrected by their versatility. He was seldom, indeed never, implacable in his resentments, and sometimes, it has been alleged, not inviolably faithful in his engagements of friendship. Much, indeed, has been said about his inconstancy and caprice; but I am inclined to believe that they originated less in a levity of sentiment than from an extreme impetuosity of feeling, which rendered him prompt to take umbrage; and his sensations of pique, where he fancied he had discovered the traces of neglect, scorn, or unkindness, took their measure of asperity from the over-flowings of the opposite sentiment which preceded them, and which seldom failed to regain its ascendancy in his bosom on the return of calmer reflection. He was candid and manly in the avowal of his errors, and *his avowal* was a *reparation*. His native *fierté* never forsaking him for a moment, the value of a frank acknowledgment was enhanced tenfold towards a generous mind, from its never being attended with servility. His mind, organized only for the stronger and more acute operations of the passions, was impracticable to the efforts of superciliousness that would have depressed it into humility, and equally superior to the encroachments of venal suggestions that might have led him into the mazes of hypocrisy.

"It has been observed that he was far from averse to the incense of flattery, and could receive it tempered with less delicacy than might have been expected, as he seldom transgressed extravagantly in that way himself: where he paid a compliment, it might indeed claim the power of intoxication, as approbation from him was always an honest tribute from the warmth and sincerity of his heart. It has been sometimes represented by those who, it should seem, had a view to depreciate, though they could not hope wholly to obscure, that native brilliancy which the powers of this extraordinary man had invariably bestowed on every thing that came from his lips or pen, that the history of the Ayr-shire plough-boy was an ingenious fiction, fabricated for the purposes of obtaining the interests of the great, and enhancing the merits of what in reality required no foil. "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "Tam o'

Shanter," and "The Mountain Daisy," besides a number of later productions, where the maturity of his genius will be readily traced, and which will be given to the public as soon as his friends have collected and arranged them, speak sufficiently for themselves; and had they fallen from a hand more dignified in the ranks of society than that of a peasant, they had perhaps bestowed as unusual a grace there as even in the humbler shade of rustic inspiration from whence they really sprang.

"To the obscure scene of Burns's education, and to the laborious, though honourable station of rural industry, in which his parentage enrolled him, almost every inhabitant of the south of Scotland can give testimony. His only surviving brother, Gilbert Burns, now guides the ploughshare of his forefathers in Ayrshire, at a farm near Mauchline; and our Poet's eldest son, a lad of nine years of age, whose early dispositions already prove him to be in some measure the inheritor of his father's talents as well as indigence, has been destined by his family to the humble employments of the loom.

"That Burns had received no classical education, and was acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors only through the medium of translations, is a fact of which all who were in the habit of conversing with him might readily be convinced. I have, indeed, seldom observed him to be at a loss in conversation, unless where the dead languages and their writers have been the subjects of discussion. When I have pressed him to tell me why he never applied himself to acquire the Latin, in particular, a language which his happy memory would have so soon enabled him to be master of, he used only to reply, with a smile, that he had already learnt all the Latin he desired to know, and that was *omnia vincit amor*—a sentence that, from his writings and most favourite pursuits, it should undoubtedly seem he was most thoroughly versed in; but I really believe his classic erudition extended little, if any, farther.

"The penchant Burns had uniformly acknowledged for the festive pleasures of the table, and towards the fairer and softer objects of nature's creation, has been the rallying point whence the attacks of his censors have been uniformly directed; and to these, it must be confessed, he showed himself no stoic. His poetical pieces blend, with alternate happiness of description, the frolic spirit of the flowing bowl, or melt the heart to the tender and impassioned sentiments in which beauty always taught him to pour forth his own. But who would wish to reprove the feelings he has consecrated with such lively touches of nature? And where is the rugged moralist who will persuade us so far to 'chill the genial current of the soul' as to regret that Ovid ever celebrated his Corinna, or that Anacreon sang beneath his vine?

"I will not, however, undertake to be the apologist of the irregularities even of a man of genius, though I believe it is as certain that genius never was free from irregularities as that their absolution may, in great measure, be justly claimed, since it is perfectly evident that the world had continued very stationary in its intellectual acquirements had it never given birth to any but men of plain sense. Evenness of conduct, and a due regard to the decorum of the world, have been so rarely seen to move hand in hand with genius that some have gone so far as to say, though there I cannot wholly acquiesce, that they are even incompatible; besides, the frailties that cast their shade over the splendour of superior merit are more conspicuously glaring than where they are the attendants of mere mediocrity. It is only on the gem we are disturbed to see the dust; the pebble may be soiled, and we never regard it. The eccentric intuitions of genius too often yield the soul to the wild effervescence of desires, always unbounded, and sometimes equally dangerous to the repose of others as fatal to its own. No wonder, then, if virtue herself be sometimes lost in the blaze of kindling animation, or that the calm monitions of reason are not invariably found sufficient to fetter an imagination which scorns the narrow limits and restrictions that would chain it to the level of ordinary minds. The child of nature, the child of sensibility, unschooled in the rigid precepts of philosophy, too often unable to control the passions which proved a source of frequent errors and misfortunes to him, Burns made his own artless apology, in language more impressive than all the argumentary vindications in the world could do, in one of his own poems, where he delineates the gradual expansion of his mind to the lessons of the 'tutelary muse,' who concludes an address to her pupil, almost unique for simplicity and beautiful poetry, with these lines:—

> 'I saw thy pulse's madd'ning play
> Wild send thee pleasure's devious way;
> Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
> By Passion driven;
> But yet the light that led astray
> Was *light from heaven.*'*

"I have already transgressed beyond the bounds I had proposed to myself on first committing this sketch to paper, which comprehends what, at least, I have been led to deem the leading features of Burns's mind and character. A literary critique I do not aim at—mine is wholly fulfilled if in these pages I have been able to delineate any of those strong traits that distinguished him, of those talents which raised him from the plough, where he passed the bleak morning of his life, weaving his rude wreaths of poesy with the wild field-flowers that sprang around his cottage, to that enviable eminence of literary fame, where Scotland will long cherish his memory with delight and gratitude;

* See the Vision—Duan 2d.

and proudly remember that beneath her cold sky a genius was ripened, without care or culture, that would have done honour to climes more favourable to those luxuriances—that warmth of colouring and fancy in which he so eminently excelled.

"From several paragraphs I have noticed in the public prints, ever since the idea of sending this sketch to some one of them was formed, I find private animosities have not yet subsided, and that envy has not yet exhausted all her shafts. I still trust, however, that honest fame will be permanently affixed to Burns's character, which I think it will be found he *has* merited, by the candid and impartial among his countrymen. And where a recollection of the imprudences that sullied his brighter qualifications interposes, let the imperfection of all human excellence be remembered at the same time, leaving those inconsistencies, which alternately exalted his nature into the seraph and sank it again into the man, to the tribunal which *alone* can investigate the labyrinths of the human heart—

'Where they alike in trembling hope *repose*,
The bosom of his father and his *God*.'—GRAY'S *Elegy*.

Annandale, August 7, 1796."]

Thus lived and died ROBERT BURNS, the chief of Scottish Poets. He seems to have been created to shew how little classic lore is required for the happiest flights of the muse—how dangerous to domestic peace burning passions and touchy sensibilities are — and how divinely a man may be inspired, without gaining bread or acquiring importance in the land his genius adorns.

Burns in his youth was tall and sinewy, with coarse swarthy features, and a ready word of wit or of kindness for all. The man differed little from the lad; his form was vigorous, his limbs shapely, his knees firmly knit, his arms muscular and round, his hands large, his fingers long, and he stood five feet ten inches high. All his movements were unconstrained and free: —he had a slight stoop of the neck; and a lock or so of his dark waving hair was tied carelessly behind with two casts of narrow black ribbon. His looks beamed with genius and intelligence; his forehead was broad and clear, shaded by raven locks inclined to curl; his cheeks were furrowed more with anxiety than time; his nose was short rather than long; his mouth, firm and manly; his teeth, white and regular; and there was a dimple, a small one, on his chin. His eyes were large, dark, and lustrous: I have heard them likened to coach-lamps approaching in a dark night, because they were first seen of any part of the Poet.—"I never saw," said Scott, "such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time." In his ordinary moods, Burns looked a man of a hundred; but when animated in company, he was a man of a million; his swarthy features glowed; his eyes kindled up till they all but lightened; his slight stoop vanished; and his voice—deep, manly, and musical—added its sorcery of pathos or of wit, till the dullest owned the enchantments of genius.

His personal strength was united to great activity: he could move a twenty-stone sack of meal without much apparent effort, and load a cart with bags of corn in the time, one of his neighbours said, that other men were talking about it. A mason was hewing him a stone for a cheese-press, and Burns took pleasure, as a side was squared, to turn over the huge mass unaided. A large pebble is still pointed out at Ellisland, as his putting-stone; and though no living man at Nithsdale perhaps can poise it in the air, the tradition proves the popular belief in his great strength. He delighted in feats of rural activity and skill; he loved to draw the straightest furrow on his fields, to sow the largest quantity of seed-corn of any farmer in the dale in a day, mow the most rye-grass and clover in ten hours of exertion, and stook to the greatest number of reapers. In this he sometimes met with his match. After a hard strife on the harvest field, with a fellow-husbandman, in which the Poet was equalled:—"Robert," said his rival, "I'm no sae far behind this time, I'm thinking?" —"John," said he in a whisper, "you're behind in something yet: I made a sang while I was stooking!" I have heard my father say that Burns had the handsomest cast of the hand in sowing corn he ever saw on a furrowed field.

Burns desired as much to excel in conversation as he did in these fits and starts of husbandry; but he was more disposed to contend for victory than to seek for knowledge. The debating club of Tarbolton was ever strong within him: a fierce lampoon, or a rough epigram, was often the reward of those who ventured to contradict him. His conversation partook of the nature of controversy, and he urged his opinions with a vehemence amounting to fierceness. All this was natural enough when he was involved in argument with the boors around him; but he was disposed, when pressed in debate, to be equally discourteous and unsparing to the polite and the titled.

In the company of men of talent he was another man; he was then among his peers, and listened with attention, and spoke with a modest eloquence which surprised many. "I think Burns," said Robertson, the historian, to Professor Christison, "was one of the most extraordinary men I ever met with; his poetry surprised me very much, his prose surprised me still more, and his conversation surprised me more than both his poetry and prose." "His address," says Robert Riddel, "was pleasing; he was neither forward nor embarrassed in manner; his spirits were generally high, and his conversation animated. His language was

fluent, frequently fine; his enunciation always rapid: his ideas clear and vigorous, and he had the rare power of modulating his peculiarly fine voice, so as to harmonise with whatever subject he touched upon. I have heard him talk with astonishing rapidity, nor miss the articulation of a single syllable; elevate and depress his voice as the topic seemed to require; and sometimes, when the subject was pathetic, he would prolong the words in the most impressive and affecting manner, indicative of the deep sensibility which inspired him. He often lamented to me that fortune had not placed him at the bar or in the senate; he had great ambition, and the feeling that he could not gratify it preyed upon him severely."

In the morning of life, Burns met lords with awe and embarrassment; in the afternoon of existence, he encountered them with suspicion and scorn. Those who named a lord, or alluded to a person of rank in his company, were instantly crushed in an epigram, or offended by some sarcastic sally. The conduct of the Scottish aristocracy had sunk to his heart, and the neglect of the Pitt administration was seldom away from his fancy. The more he saw of the world, and the more he reflected, these unwelcome thoughts pressed the more upon him. He could not but know that the high-born and the well-connected prospered: that thousands less worthy than himself were fattening on posts and pensions, and elbowing the sons of genius out of what he considered their patrimony; he had also been made to feel his dependence, in that insulting mandate from the Board of Excise, that his duty was "to act, and not to think." It is true that his dislike might have been expressed with more courtesy, and his wit might have had less ferocity, with equal keenness of point. Yet, when he proposed to drink the health of Washington instead of Pitt, it was less a matter of ill-breeding, or republican feeling, than a burst of anger: he considered the Premier as one of his oppressors; and perhaps the want of courtesy belonged to him who invited the Poet to dinner, and greeted him with this unwelcome toast.

In the company of ladies, Burns was quite another being; for them he calmed down his impetuous temper, and allowed all that was winning in his nature to shine out. He was fierce as Moloch among men: among women he was a Belial, soft, insinuating, and eloquent: his eyes, which before sparkled like those of the serpent, became meek like those of the dove: the love of contradiction died within him, and he courted his way to their hearts and their understandings at the same time. In this his letters differ widely from his conversation: the presence of beauty inspired him; when it was no longer before him, he seems to hunt for thoughts and hesitate for words, and, amid much natural emotion, is affected and cumbrous. Nothing more untrue was ever uttered than that his female patronesses shrunk from the vehement familiarity of his admiration: there is no proof to be found of this: Margaret Chalmers, indeed, scrupled to have a song published in her praise; and Miss Alexander chose to resent by her silence the song of the "Lass of Ballochmyle;" but there is no instance of ladies shrinking from the audacity of his admiration. His most constant correspondents were ladies of birth and talent; the ladies of the north, much to their honour, sympathised with their Poet to the last; and the day after he was buried, some of the proudest dames of Dumfries-shire shed tears, as they scattered flowers over his grave. In truth, he did not express the rapture of an enamoured peasant, as Jeffrey assures us he did, but the admiration of a man: he preferred the good-breeding of nature to the iced civilities of polished life: he did not, indeed, think that woman was to be worshipped according to the fantastic rules of chivalry; but when she spoke, he listened; when she sang, he seemed to become intoxicated with the sound; and when she played on an instrument, he neither heard nor saw aught else save herself and her music.

To the opinions of the world Burns paid too little deference: whatever he felt he said, and what he said often glanced sharply on religion and on politics. He attacked the fiery zeal of sundry churchmen—it was called an attack on religion: he attacked the pride and presumption of the titled—it was called envy and arrogance: he wished for more wealth among the poor, and more humility among the rich—and was branded as a disturber of the public peace; and he desired to see the principles of the revolution of 1688 carried into effect with less corruption in the high places—and was called a jacobin, and ordered to be silent.

What he was with the world at large, so was he with man in particular: he had no medium in his hatred or his love; he never spared the dull, as if they were not to be endured because he was himself bright; wealth he was inclined to visit as a fault on the possessor. When in the company of the demure and the pious, he loved to start doubts in religion, which he knew nothing short of inspiration could solve; and to speak of Calvinism with such latitude of language as shocked or vexed all listeners, and caused him to be regarded by some as a free-thinker or a deist. In his own household he was another man: he was an affectionate husband and a dutiful father; he loved to teach his boys their duty to God and to their neighbour. To Mrs. Haugh—a most respectable woman—in whose house he lived in the Bank-Vennel, and who was much with him during his long illness—he lamented that he had sometimes doubted the truths of Scripture: he found them to be his consolation at last.

I have no wish to shut my eyes on the follies of the Poet: they have darkened other narratives than mine. The memoir of Heron, the criticism of Jeffrey, and the communications of Syme have gone widely abroad. With the first, Burns is a coarse libertine; with the second a careless drunkard, who starved his wife and children; while the third describes him as rough and fierce, and inclined to stab the friend who hazarded good advice. Of the feelings of Heron, it is sufficient to say that he penned his depreciating memoir to meet the subscription for the Poet's widow and children; of the opinion of Jeffrey, I may safely assert that he has judged amiss; and with regard to the account of Syme, I can only imagine that it originated in some mistake on the part of him of Ryedale:—to suppose Burns serious, contradicts all the rest of his life. Of Heron, the Poet must have thought when he said,—"I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler with the heavy malice of savage stupidity exulting in his hireling paragraphs."

Burns was no tippler; he loved the excitement of company, and to see the bottle circulate; to others, as well as to him,

"Every new cork was a new spring of joy."

Nor did he know always when to retire from these social excesses; good fellowship was as a spell upon him. His own heart, always too open, was then laid bare. He watched the characters of men; he gladdened the clever by the sallies of his fancy, stimulated the dull by his wit, and imagined that he was strengthening the ties of friendship, and that

"The bands grew the tighter the more they were wet."

No doubt, later in life he desired to escape from uneasy reflection—from thinking of ruined hopes and humbled ambition, and, seeking consolation in company, he took an angel of darkness to his heart rather than one of light. I am assured by Mrs. Haugh, who knew him well to the last, that Burns drank from circumstances rather than inclination. An angel from heaven, she said, could scarcely have escaped corruption in his situation: he was constantly invited, nay sometimes almost literally dragged into company. Her husband now and then, as he went out by day-light in the morning to his work, met Burns coming home. The Poet never passed him without a word or two, expressing his sorrow for the life he was leading—such as, "O, Mr. Haugh, you are a happy man; you have arisen from a refreshing sleep, and left a kind wife and children, while I am returning a poor self-condemned wretch to mind." At whatever hour he came home, or in whatever condition he returned, he always spoke kindly to his wife; reproachful words were never heard between them.* He was a steadfast friend and a good neighbour, ready with his hands, and willing to oblige: while he lived at Ellisland, few passed his door without being cheered by his wit or treated at his table.

Of women and their fascinations he loved to talk freely and wildly; the witchery of his conversation, and the magic of his songs, were too powerful for the resolution of some; but his errors in this way have been seriously exaggerated. Those who were unacquainted with the freedoms of the muse beheld him making love in every song he wrote; and young spinsters—

"Coost their heads fu' high,"

when they saw their charms reflected in the bright verses of the Bard, and suspected their own fortitude. Some were less timid: one intrepid young lady said she desired the Poet's acquaintance of all things, and intimated the time and place where he might meet her. He took a way which did not always succeed, of scaring such impertinents.—"It is scarcely modest in a fine young woman," was the reply, "to seek the acquaintance of one whose character is considered so bad." To a lively landlady in Dumfries, whose ale firkins were to be examined, he said,—"Who will go down to the cellar with me till I gauge the browst?"—"I'll go down with you myself, Mr. Burns," she replied. He turned round on her, and, with a peculiar glance, said,—"O, woman, strong is thy faith!" Stories of this complexion, oftener for than against him, might be multiplied:—

"Between two maids, who hath the merriest eye
He had, indeed, no shallow spirit of judgment."

The political heresies of the Poet are more easily dealt with. He knew that he was created with high powers of mind; he was conscious not only of his superiority to the peasants around, but to men of high title and of long descent, and felt himself defrauded of the station nature intended him to fill in society:—this is visible in almost all he writes. He can justify the ways of God to man, but he cannot justify the ways of man to God; he feels that heaven creates nothing hereditary—neither beauty, nor taste, nor talent; and he is grieved to see men insult the great laws of nature, and form institutions contradicting God's divine system. This is the sentiment which inspires that noble lyric "A man's a man for a' that;" and it was this feeling which made him sad and despond-

[*"He was always anxious that his wife should have a neat and genteel appearance. In consequence, as she alleged, of the duties of nursing and attending to her infants, she could not help being sometimes a little slovenly. Burns disliked this, and not only remonstrated against it in a gentle way, but did the utmost that in him lay to counteract it, by buying for her the best clothes he could afford. Any little novelty in female dress was almost sure to meet with patronage from Burns—all with the aim of keeping up a spirit for neat dressing in his wife. She was, for instance, one of the first persons in Dumfries who appeared in a dress of gingham—a stuff now common to all, but, at its first introduction, rather costly, and almost exclusively used by persons of superior condition." CHAMBERS.]

ing—which induced him to seek consolation in the shadowy images of republics, and hail with so much rapture the dawn of a liberty which promised the empire of the earth to the worth and genius which it produced. That Pitt did not feel truly, nor weigh worthily, the genius and sentiments of the "meteor of the north," as the Poet was idly called, seems perfectly clear. When reminded of his claims by Henry Addington, he pushed the bottle to Lord Melville, and did nothing; his own days were shortened by disappointed hopes and crushed ambition. Had a situation worthy of the genius of Burns been bestowed on him, this tale had neither been so dark nor so sorrowful—he would not have perished like a caged eagle, denied the full use of its wings and the free range of its cloud-capt mountains.

Of his modes of study and habits of life much has already been said; something more can be added. He has told us how he delighted in the rushing of the storm through the leafless woods; how he rejoiced in the out-gushing of the flowers in spring, in the song of the birds and the melody of running waters. In stormy nights he has been known to rise from good company and a well-furnished table, to gaze on the tumultuous clouds, to mark the vivid lightnings, and hearken to the pealing thunder. He loved, while in his farm, to stand on the scaur, and, when Nith was in flood, look at the red torrent bursting from the Bankhead-wood against Dalswinton holm, flashing and foaming from side to side, making the ashes and alders of the banks quiver and quake. His favourite spot of study lies between Ellisland onstead and the Isle—where the uplands descend by the water side to the holm. Here the neighbouring gentry love to walk, and peasants to assemble — they hold it sacred to the memory of his musings.

When he lived in Dumfries, he had three favourite walks—on the dock-green by the river side—among the ruins of Lincluden College,—and towards the Martingdon-Ford on the north side of the Nith. This latter place was secluded, commanding a view of the distant hills and the romantic towers of Lincluden, and afforded soft green-sward banks to rest upon, and the sight and sound of the stream:—here he composed many of his finest songs. As soon as he was heard to hum to himself, his wife saw that he had something in his mind, and was quite prepared to see him snatch up his hat and set silently off for his musing ground. When by himself and in the open air, his ideas arranged themselves in their natural order, words came at will, and he seldom returned without having finished a song. In case of interruption, he set about completing it at the fire-side; he balanced himself on the hind-legs of his arm-chair, and, rocking to and fro, continued to hum the tune, and seldom failed of success. When the verses were finished, he passed them through the ordeal of Mrs. Burns' voice; listening attentively while she sung; asked her if any of the words were difficult, and when one happened to be too rough he readily found a smoother—but he never, save at the resolute entreaty of a scientific musician, sacrificed sense to sound. The autumn was his favourite season, and the twilight his favourite hour of study.

As a farmer and an exciseman he did his duty, and he did little more. He was laborious by fits, and attentive by starts; he tilled the ground and protected the revenue, but he wrought without hope in the one, and without heart in the other. He endeavoured to make his farm yield the rent by butter and by cheese, as well as by corn; and as this required female hands, he confided it mostly to the management of his wife and maid-servants. But Ellisland is naturally fitter for corn than for grass; the green-sward was far from being so luxuriant as that of the milk and butter districts of Cunningham and Kyle; nor was his wife sufficiently intimate with the management of cows, and the guidance of a dairy. The plan of Burns to unite, in his own person, the poet, the exciseman, and the farmer, was poetic, and failed as much from miscalculation as mismanagement. His duties in the Excise he performed with strict punctuality; he was afraid of being reckoned negligent, and was always at his post. He kept his books in excellent order.—"Bring me Burns' books," said Maxwell of Terraughty, a rigid and determined magistrate; "it always does me good to see them—they shew me that a warm kind-hearted man may be a diligent and honest officer." He was not a bustling active gauger, nor did he love to put himself foremost in adventures which he knew would end in distress to many. One clear moonlight morning, on being awakened by the clang of horses at a gallop, he started up, looked out at the window, and to his wife, who asked eagerly what it was, he whispered, "It is the noise of smugglers, Jean."—"Robert, then I fear ye'll be to follow them?" she said. —"And so I would," he answered, "were it Will Gunnion or Edgar Wright; but it's poor Brandyburn, who has a wife and three weans, and is no doing owre weel in his farm. What can I do?" She pulled him from the window. Many anecdotes of this kind might be told.

Of his quick wit and caustic keenness of remark I have already given instances; more are in circulation both in prose and verse. It is much, however, to be regretted that his sallies, where sentiment unites with gaiety, have frequently escaped, as matters too light and elusive, from the public mind; while sayings and retorts—sharp, personal, or profane—have remained. I shall relate a few, that nothing on which his spirit is impressed may be lost. He

disliked puns, and was seldom civil to those who uttered them.—"After all, a pun is an innocent thing," said one of his companions.—"Innocent!" said Burns, "no, Sir; it is committing 'a deed without a name' with the language." He disliked to hear great people talked about more than they deserved. One who was in his company kept saying, the Earl of such a place said this, and Duke so-and-so said that.—"Be silent, Sir!" exclaimed the Poet; "you are stopping our mouths by a royal proclamation." He loved praise—and loved it not the less when it came from the lips of an accomplished lady.—"Madam," said he to Mrs. M'Murdo, "your praise has ballooned me up Parnassus."—"My merit is not all my own," he said to Robert Aiken of Ayr, "for you have read me into reputation." He called once on a certain Lord, in Edinburgh, and was shewn into the library. To amuse himself till his Lordship was at leisure, he took down a volume of Shakspeare, splendidly bound, and on opening it, discovered, from the gilding, that it had never been read; also, that the worms were eating it through and through. Some dozen years afterwards, another visiter took down the same volume, and found the following lines pencilled by Burns on the first page:—

"Through and through the inspired leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings;
But, oh! respect his lordship's taste,
And spare his golden bindings."

["Even to the ladies," says Lockhart, "when he suspected them of wishing to make a show of him, he could not help administering a little of his village discipline. A certain stately Peeress sent to invite him, while in Edinburgh, to her assembly, without, as he fancied, having sufficiently cultivated his acquaintance beforehand. His answer was:—'Mr. Burns will do himself the honour of waiting on the Countess of ———— provided her Lordship will invite also the learned Pig.'—Such an animal was then exhibiting in the Grass-market of Edinburgh."]

Burns paid little deference to the artificial distinctions of society. On his way to Leith, one morning, he met a man in hoddin' grey—a west-country farmer; he shook him earnestly by the hand, and stopt and conversed with him. All this was seen by a young Edinburgh blood, who took the poet roundly to task for this defect of taste.—"Why, you fantastic gomeral," said Burns, "it was not the grey coat, the scone-bonnet, and the Sanquhar boot-hose I spoke to, but the man that was in them; and the man, Sir, for true worth, would weigh you and me, and ten more such, down any day." His discernment was great: when Scott was quite a lad he caught the notice of the Poet, by naming the author of some verses describing a soldier lying dead on the snow. Burns regarded the future minstrel with sparkling eyes, and said, "Young man, you have begun to consider these things early." He paused on seeing Scott's flushing face—shook him by the hand, saying in a deep tone, "This boy will be heard of yet."

Speaking one day of his own poetry, Burns said, "I have much to answer for: my success in rhyme has produced a shoal of ill-spawned monsters who imagine, because they make words clink, they are poets. It requires a will-o'-wisp to pass over the quicksands and quagmires of the Scottish dialect. I am spunkie—they follow me, and sink."

On hearing a gentleman sneering at the Solemn League and Covenant, and calling it ridiculous and fanatical, the Poet eyed him across the table, and exclaimed,

"The Solemn League and Covenant
Cost Scotland blood—cost Scotland tears—
But it sealed Freedom's sacred cause:—
If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneers."

Of the farm of Ellisland, when some one said it was good ground, Burns answered, "And so it is, save what is composed of stones. It is not land, Sir; it is the riddlings of the creation!" While he was at Moffat once with Clarke the composer, the Poet called for a bumper of brandy.—"Oh, not a bumper," said the musician—"I prefer two small glasses."—"Two glasses!" cried Burns, "why, you are like the lass in Kyle, who said she would rather be kissed twice bare-headed than once with her bonnet on." At the table of Maxwell of Terraughty, when one of the guests chose to talk of the Dukes and Earls with whom he had drunk or dined, Burns silenced him with an epigram:—

"What of earls with whom you have supt,
And of dukes that you dined with yestreen?
Lord! an insect's an insect at most,
Though it crawl on the curls of a queen."

On one occasion, being storm-stayed at Lamington in Clydesdale, he went to church, but was so little pleased with the preacher and the place, that he left the following poetic record on the church-window:—

"As cauld a wind as ever blew,
A caulder kirk, and in't but few;
As cauld a minister 's e'er spak,
Ye'se a' be het ere I come back."

["Sir Walter Scott," says Lockhart, "possessed a tumbler, on which were the following verses, written by Burns on the arrival of a friend, Mr. W. Stewart, factor to a gentleman of Nithsdale. The landlady being very wroth at what she considered the disfigurement of her glass, a gentleman present appeased her by paying down a shilling, and carried off the relic:—

"You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
You're welcome, Willie Stewart;
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That's half sae welcome 's thou art.

"Come, bumpers high, express your joy,
The bowl we maun renew it;
The tappit-hen gae bring her ben
To welcome Willie Stewart.

"May foes be straing, and friends be slack,
Ilk action may he rue it;
May woman on him turn her back
That wrangs thee, Willie Stewart!"]

"I dined with Burns," said Mrs. Basil Montagu, "at Arbigland: he was witty; drank as others drank; and was long in coming to the tea-table. It was then the fashion for young ladies to be busy about something—I was working a flower. The Poet sat down beside me, talked of the beauty of what I was imitating, and put his hand so near the work, that I said, 'Well, take it, and do a bit yourself.'—'O, ho!' said he, 'you think my hand is unsteady with wine. I cannot work a flower, madam; but—' he pulled the thread out of the needle, and re-threaded it in a moment—'can a tipsy man do that?' He talked to me of his children, more particularly of his eldest son, and called him a promising boy—'And yet, madam,' he said, with a sarcastic glance of his eye, 'I hope he will turn out a glorious blockhead, and so make his fortune.'" Burns assumed, as well he might, the title of Poet: he was none of those who insult the taste of their admirers by depreciating the merit of their own works: on one of his books, in my possession, there is written, in his own rough, free, manly hand, "Robert Burns, Poet;" an imitation of this is added to the admirable portrait which embellishes this edition. On the collar of a favourite dog he had the same words engraven.

As a poet, Burns stands in the first rank: his conceptions are original; his thoughts new and weighty; his manner unborrowed; and even his language is his own. He owes no honour to his subjects, for they are all of an ordinary kind, such as humble life around him presented: he sought neither in high station nor in history for matter to his muse, and yet all his topics are simple, natural, and to be found without research. The Scottish bards, who preceded him, selected subjects which obtained notice from their oddity, and treated them in a way singular and *outré*. The verses of the first and fifth James, as well as those of Ramsay and Fergusson, are chiefly a succession of odd and ludicrous pictures, as true as truth itself, and no more. To their graphic force of delineation Burns added sentiment and passion, and an elegant tenderness and simplicity. He took topics familiar to all; the Daisy grew on the lands he ploughed; the Mouse built her nest on his own stubble-field; the Haggis smoked on his own board; the Scotch Drink which he sung was distilled on the banks of Doon; the Dogs that conversed so wittily and wisely were his own collies; Tam O'Shanter was a merry husbandman of his own acquaintance; and even the "De'il himself" was familiar to all, and had often alarmed, by his eldritch croon, and the marks of his cloven foot, the pastoral people of Kyle. Burns was the first who taught the world that in lowly subjects high poetry resided. Touched by him, they were lifted at once into the regions of inspiration. His spirit ascended into an humble topic, as the sap of spring ascends a tree to endow it with beauty and fragrance.

Burns is our chief national Poet; he owes nothing of the structure of his verse or of the materials of his poetry to other lands—he is the offspring of the soil; he is as natural to Scotland as the heath is to her hills, and all his brightness, like our nocturnal Aurora, is of the north. Nor has he taken up fleeting themes; his song is not of the external manners and changeable affectations of man—it is of the human heart—of the mind's hopes and fears, and of the soul's aspirations. Others give us the outward form and pressure of society—the court-costume of human nature—the laced lapelle and the epauletted shoulder. He gives us flesh and blood; all he has he holds in common with mankind, yet all is national and Scottish. We can see to whom other bards have looked up for inspiration—like fruit of the finest sort, they smack of the stock on which they were grafted. Burns read Young, Thomson, Shenstone, and Shakspeare; yet there is nothing of Young, Thomson, Shenstone, or Shakspeare about him; nor is there much of the old ballad. His light is of nature, like sunshine, and not reflected. When, in after life, he tried imitation, his "Epistle to Graham of Fintray" shewed satiric power and polish little inferior to Dryden.

He is not only one of the truest and best of Scottish Poets, but, in ease, fire, and passion, he is second to none save Shakspeare. I know of no one besides, whose verse flows forth so sparkling and spontaneous. On the lines of other bards we see marks of care and study—now and then they are happy, but they are as often elaborated out and brightened like a key by frequent handling. Burns is seldom or never so—he wrote from the impulse of nature—he wrote because his passions raged like so many demons till they got vent in rhyme. Others sit and solicit the muse, like a coy mistress, to be kind; she came to Burns "unsent for," like the "bonnie lass" in the song, and showered her favours freely. The strength was equal to the harmony; rugged westlin words were taken from the lips of the weaver and the ploughman, and adorned with melody and feeling; and familiar phrases were picked up from shepherds and mechanics, and rendered as musical as Apollo's lute.—"I can think of no verse since Shakspeare's," said Pitt to Henry Addington, "which comes so sweetly and at once from

nature. 'Out of the eater came forth meat:'" —but the premier praised whom he starved. Burns was not a Poet by fits and starts; the mercury of his genius stood always at the inspired point; like the fairy's drinking-cup, the fountain of his fancy was ever flowing and ever full. He had, it is true, set times and seasons when the fruits of his mind were more than usually abundant; but the songs of spring were equal to those of summer—those of summer were not surpassed by those of autumn; the quantity might be different, the flavour and richness were ever the same.

His variety is equal to his originality. His humour, his gaiety, his tenderness, and his pathos come all in a breath; they come freely, for they come of their own accord; nor are they huddled together at random, like doves and crows in a flock; the contrast is never offensive; the comic slides easily into the serious, the serious into the tender, and the tender into the pathetic. The witch's cup, out of which the wondering rustic drank seven kinds of wine at once, was typical of the muse of Burns. It is this which has made him welcome to all readers.—"No poet," says Scott, "with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions."

Notwithstanding the uncommon ease and natural elegance of his musings—the sweet and impassioned tone of his verse, critics have not been wanting who perceived in his works the humility of his origin. Yet his poems, I remember well enough, were considered by many, at first, as the labours of some gentleman who assumed the rustic for the sake of indulging in satire; their knowledge was reckoned beyond the reach, and their flights above the power, of a simple ploughman. Something of this belief may be seen in Mrs. Scott of Wauchope's letter; and when it was known for a truth that the author was a ploughman, many lengthy discussions took place concerning the way in which the Poet had acquired his knowledge. Ayr race-course was pointed out as the likely scenes of his studies of high life, where he found what was graceful and elegant! When Jeffrey wrote his depreciating criticism, he forgot that Burns had studied politeness in the very school where he himself was polished. The stanza, in the lines on meeting with Lord Daer, commencing:—

"I've been at drunken writers' feasts,"

claims a scholarship which the critic might have respected. If sharp epigrams, familiar gallantry, love of independence, and a leaning to the tumid be, as that critic assures us, true symptoms of vulgar birth, then Swift was a scavenger, Rochester a coalheaver, Pope a carman, and Thomson a boor. He might as well see lowness of origin in the James Stuart who wrote "Christ's Kirk on the green," as in the Robert Burns who wrote "Tam O'Shanter." The nature which Burns infused into all he wrote deals with internal emotions: feeling is no more vulgar in a ploughman than in a prince.

In all this I see the reluctance of an accomplished scholar to admit the merits of a rustic poet who not only claimed, but took, the best station on the Caledonian Parnassus. It could be no welcome sight to philosophers, historians, and critics to see a peasant, fragrant from the furrow, elbowing his way through their polished ranks to the highest place of honour, exclaiming,—

"What's a' your jargon o' your schools?"

Some of them were no doubt astonished and incensed; nature was doing too much: they avenged themselves by advising him to leave his vulgar or romantic fancies and grow classical. His best songs they called random flights; his happiest poems the fruit of a vagrant impulse; they accounted him an accident—"a wild colt of a comet"—a sort of splendid error; and refused to look upon him as a true poet, raised by the kindly warmth of nature; for they thought nothing beautiful which was not produced or adorned by learning. "What would Burns have been if a Patrician?" said Lord Byron. "We should have had more polish—less force—just as much verse, but no immortality!"

Burns is a thorough Scotchman; his nationality, like cream on milk, floats on the surface of all his works; it mingles in his humour as well as in his tenderness; yet it is seldom or never offensive to an English ear; there is nothing narrow-souled in it. He rejoices in Scotland's ancient glory and in her present strength; he bestows his affection on her heathery mountains, as well as on her romantic vales; he glories in the worth of her husbandmen, and in the loveliness of her maidens. The brackeny glens and thistly brae-sides of the North are more welcome to his sight than the sunny dales of Italy, fragrant with ungathered grapes; its men, if not quite divinities, are more than mortal; and the women are clothed in beauty, and walk in a light of their own creating; a haggis is food fit for gods; brose is a better sort of ambrosia; "wi' twopenny we fear nae evil;" and whiskey not only makes us insensible of danger, but inspires noble verse and heroic deeds. There is something at once ludicrous and dignified in all this: to excite mingled emotions was the aim of the Poet. Besides a love of country, there is an intense love of freedom about him; not the savage joy in the boundless forest and the unlicensed range, but the calm determination and temperate delight of a reflecting mind. Burns is the bard of liberty—not that which sets fancy free and

fetters the body; he resists oppression—he covets free thought and speech—he scorns slavish obedience to the mob as much as he detests tyranny in the rulers. He spoke out like a bold-inspired person; he knew his word would have weight with the world, and sung his "A man's a man for a' that," as a watch-word to future generations—as a spell against slavery.

The best poems of Burns relate to rural and pastoral life, and describe the hopes, the joys, and aspirations of that portion of the people falsely called the humble, as if grandeur of soul were a thing "born in the purple," and not the free gift and bounty of heaven. The passions and feelings of man are disguised, not changed, in polished society; flesh and blood are the same beneath hoddin' grey as beneath three-piled velvet. This was what Burns alluded to when he said he saw little in the splendid circles of Edinburgh which was new to him. His pictures of human life and of the world are of a mental as well as a national kind. His "Twa Dogs" prove that happiness is not unequally diffused: "Scotch Drink" gives us fire-side enjoyments; the "Earnest Cry and Prayer" shews the keen eye which humble people cast on their rulers; the "Address to the Deil" indulges in religious humanities, in which sympathy overcomes fear; "The Auld Mare," and "The Address to Mailie," enjoin, by the most simple and touching examples, kindness and mercy to dumb creatures; "The Holy Fair" desires to curb the licentiousness of those who seek amusement, instead of holiness, in religion; "Man was made to Mourn" exhorts the strong and the wealthy to be mindful of the weak and the poor; "Hallowe'en" shews us superstition in a domestic aspect; "Tam O'Shanter" adorns popular belief with humorous terror, and helps us to laugh old dreads away; "The Mouse," in its weakness, contrasts with man in his strength, and preaches to us the instability of happiness on earth; while "The Mountain Daisy" pleads with such moral pathos the cause of the flowers of the field sent by God to adorn the earth for man's pleasure, that our feet have pressed less ungraciously on the "wee modest crimson-tipped flower" since his song was written.

Others of his poems have a still grander reach. "The Vision" reveals the Poet's plan of Providence, proves the worth of eloquence, bravery, honesty, and beauty, and that even the rustic bard himself is an useful and ornamental link in the great chain of being. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" connects us with the invisible world, and shews that domestic peace, faithful love, and patriotic feelings, are of earthly things most akin to the joys of heaven; while the divine "Elegy on Matthew Henderson" unites human nature in a bond of sympathy with the stars of the sky, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the flowery vale, and the lonely mountain. The hastiest of his effusions has a wise aim; — this the eloquent Curran perceived when he spoke of the "sublime morality of Burns."

Had Burns, in his poems, preached only so many moral sermons, his audience might have been a select, but it would have been a limited, one. The sublimest truths, like the surest medicines, are sometimes uneasy to swallow: for this the Poet provided an effectual remedy; he associated his moral counsel with so much tenderness and pathos, and garnished it all about with such exquisite humour, that the public, like the giant drinking the wine in Homer, gaped, and cried, "More! this is divine!" If a reader has such a limited soul as to love humour only, why Burns is his man—he has more of it than any modern poet: should he covet tenderness, he cannot read far in Burns without finding it to his mind; should he desire pathos, the Scottish Peasant has it of the purest sort; and if he wished for them mingled, let him try no other bard—for in what other poet will he find them woven more naturally into the web of song? It is by thus suiting himself to so many minds and tastes that Burns has become such a favourite with the world; if, in a strange company, we should chance to stumble in quoting him, an English voice, or an Irish one, corrects us; much of the business of life is mingled with his verse; and the lover, whether in joy or in sorrow, will find that Burns has anticipated every throb of his heart:—

> "Every pulse along his veins,
> And every roving fancy."

["Burns," says Professor Wilson, "was in many respects born at a happy time; happy for a man of genius like him, but fatal and hopeless to the more common mind, a whole world of life lay before him, whose inmost recesses, and darkest nooks, and sunniest eminences, he had familiarly trodden from his childhood. All that world he felt could be made his own. No conqueror had overrun its fertile provinces, and it was for him to be crowned supreme over all the

> 'Lyric singers of that high-soul'd land.'

The crown that he has won can never be removed from his head. Much is yet left for other poets, even among that life where his spirit delighted to work, but he has built monuments on all the high places, and they who follow can only hope to leave behind them some far humbler memorials."]

He was the first of our northern poets who brought deep passion and high energy to the service of the muse, who added sublimity to simplicity, and found loveliness and elegance dwelling among the cottages of his native land His simplicity is graceful as well as strong; he is never mean, never weak, never vulgar, and

but seldom coarse. All he says is above the mark of other men: his language is familiar, yet dignified; careless, yet concise; and he touches on the most ordinary—nay, perilous themes, with a skill so rare and felicitous that good fortune seems to unite with good taste, in helping him through the Slough of Despond, in which so many meaner spirits have wallowed. No one has greater power in adorning the humble, and dignifying the plain—no one else has so happily picked the sweet fresh flowers of poesy from among the thorns and brambles of the ordinary paths of existence.

[“The excellence of Burns,” says Thomas Carlyle—a true judge, “is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but at the same time it is plain and easily recognised—it is his sincerity—his indisputable air of truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience: they are the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst that he decribes; those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul,—noble thoughts and definite resolves—and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it, too, with such melody and modulation as he can, and though but in homely rustic jingle, it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers, and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself.

“But independently of this essential gift of true poetic feeling, there is a certain rugged, sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written. A virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry,—it is redolent of natural life, and of handy, natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet frequently a sweet native gracefulness. He is tender, and he is vehement; yet without constraint, or any visible effort. He melts the heart, or inflames it with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see in him the gentleness, though trembling pity, of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour, of the hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire, as lightning, lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a consonance, in his bosom, for every note of human feeling; the high and the low,—the sad and the ludicrous,—the mournful and the joyful, are welcome in their turns, to his all-conceiving spirit. And then, with what a prompt and eager force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye, full and clear in every lineament, and catches the real type and essence of it, among a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances,—no one of which misleads him! If there is aught of reason or truth to be discovered, there is no sophistry, no vain, surface logic detains him:—quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces into the marrow of the question, and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description? some visual object to be represented? No poet, of any age or nation, is more graphic than Burns. The characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance. Three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness,—and in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness that it seems like a master limner working with a burnt stick, and yet the burin of a Retsch is not more expressive or exact.

“This clearness of sight we may call the foundation of all talent. Homer surpasses all men in this quality; but strangely enough, at no great distance below him, are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs in truth to what is called a lively mind, and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity,—their descriptions are detailed, ample, and tediously exact. Homer’s fire bursts through from time to time as by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire, only a clear insight into the goings on of nature. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions,—of the strength, the piercing emphasis, with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble, but the readiest, proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his? who ever uttered words—words more memorable, either by their burning vehemence, their cool vigour, or their laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject—a whole scene. Our Scottish forefathers, he says, struggled forward in the battle field, *red-wat shod*, giving in this one term a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for art. In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigour of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, as in his feelings and volitions; and this is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment.

“He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavours. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation. Poverty, neglect, and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his art, were a small matter to him. The pride and passions of the world lay far beneath his feet,—and he

looked down alike on noble and on slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man—with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, and with pity. Nay, we question whether, for his culture as a poet, poverty, and much suffering, for a season, were not altogether advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry—industry, which all true feeling sanctions, nay, prescribes—and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones. But to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices, and brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent from heaven? Was it his aim to enjoy life? To-morrow he must go drudge as an exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody and indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run a muck against them all. How could a man, as falsely placed by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment, or peaceable diligence, for an hour? What he did under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

"Byron—a man of endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns—was born in the rank, not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer. The highest worldly honours, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand—and what does all this avail him? Is he happy? is he good? is he true? Alas! he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the infinite—the eternal—and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the housetop to reach the stars. Like Burns, he is only a proud man, and might, like him, have purchased a pocket copy of Milton, to study the character of Satan; for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar—the hero of his poetry, and the model, apparently, of his conduct. As in Burns's case, too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth. Both poet and man of the world he must not be;—vulgar ambition will not live kindly with poetic adoration—he cannot serve God and mammon. Byron, like Burns, is unhappy; nay, he is the most wretched of all men: his life is falsely arranged; the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world,—but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which, ere long, will fill itself with snow.

"Byron and Burns were put forth as missioners to their generation, to teach it a higher doctrine, a purer truth: they had a message to deliver which left them no rest till it was accomplished. In dim throes of pain this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers; and in pleasant fellowship will they live there. They are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only in death and the grave.

"We confess it is not without a degree of mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted—yet ruined—to so little purpose, with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral in this piece of history, twice told us in our own time. Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep significance. Surely it would become such a man,—furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the poet of the age,—to consider well what it is he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it; for the words of Milton were true at all times, and were never truer than at this: 'He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem.' If he cannot so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are for him. Let him dwindle into a modish ballad-monger, let him worship and be-sing the idols of the time,—and the time will not fail to reward him; if, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity. Byron and Burns could not live as idol priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not; for it is not in the favour of the great, nor of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpungable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favour, and furtherance for literature: it is like the costliest flower-jar inclosing the loveliest on earth. Yet, let not the relation be mistaken:—a true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures,—their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table wit—he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties let no such union be attempted. Will a courser of the sun work patiently in the harness of a dray horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; and will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?"]

It must be mentioned, in abatement of this high praise, that Burns occasionally speaks with too little delicacy. He violates without necessity the true decorum of his subject, and indulges in hidden meanings and allusions, such as the most tolerant cannot applaud. Nor is this the worst: he is much too free in his treatment of matters holy. He ventures to take the Deity to task about his own passions, and the order of nature, in a way less reverent than he employs when winning his way to woman's love. He has, in truth, touches of profanity which make the pious shudder. In the warmth of conversation such expressions might escape from the lips; but they should not have been coolly sanctioned in the closet with the pen. These deformities are not, however, of frequent occurrence; and, what is some extenuation, they are generally united to a noble or natural sentiment. He is not profane or indecorous for the sake of being so: his faults, as well as his beauties, come from an overflowing fulness of mind.

His songs have all the beauties, and few of the faults, of his poems. As compositions to be sung, a finer and more scientific harmony, and a more nicely-modulated dance of words were required, and Burns had both in perfection. They flow as readily to the music as if both the air and verse had been created together, and blend and mingle like two uniting streams. The sentiments are from nature; and they never, in any instance, jar or jangle with the peculiar feeling of the music. While humming the air over during the moments of composition, the words came and took their proper places, each according to the meaning of the air: rugged expressions could not well mingle with thoughts inspired by harmony.

In his poems, Burns supposes himself in the society of men, and indulges in reckless sentiments and unmeasured language: in his songs he imagines himself in softer company; when woman's eye is on him he is gentle, persuasive, and impassioned; he is never boisterous; he seeks not to say fine things, yet he never misses saying them; his compliments are uttered of free will, and all his thoughts flow naturally from the subject. There is a natural grace and fascination about his songs; all is earnest and from the heart: he is none of your millinery bards who deal in jewelled locks, laced garments, and shower pearls and gems by the bushel on youth and beauty. He makes bright eyes, flushing cheeks, the music of the tongue, and the pulses' maddening play, do all. Those charms he knew came from heaven, and not out of the tire-woman's basket, and would last when fashions changed. It is remarkable that the most naturally elegant and truly impassioned songs in the language were written by a ploughman-lad in honour of the rustic lasses around him.

If we regard the songs of Burns as so many pastoral pictures, we will find that he has an eye for the beauties of nature as accurate and as tasteful as the happiest landscape painter. Indeed he seldom gives us a finished image of female loveliness without the accompaniment of blooming flowers, running streams, waving woods, and the melody of birds: this is the frame-work which sets off the portrait. He has recourse rarely to embellishments borrowed from art; the lighted hall and the thrilling strings are less to him than a walk with her he loves by some lonely rivulet's side, when the dews are beginning to glisten on the lilies and weigh them down, and the moon is moving not unconsciously above them. In all this we may recognize a true poet—one who felt that woman's loveliness triumphed over these fragrant accompaniments, and who regarded her still as the "blood royal of life," the brightest part of creation.

Those who desire to feel, in their full force, the songs of Burns, must not hope it from scientific singers in the theatres. The right scene is the pastoral glen; the right tongue for utterance is that of a shepherd lass; and the proper song is that which belongs to her present feelings. The gowany glen, the nibbling sheep, the warbling birds, and the running stream give the inanimate, while the singer herself personates the living, beauty of the song. I have listened to a country girl singing one of his songs, while she spread her webs to bleach by a running stream—ignorant of her audience—with such feeling and effect as were quite overpowering. This will keep the fame of Burns high among us: should the printer's ink dry up, ten thousand melodious tongues will preserve his songs to remote generations.

The variety, too, of his lyrics is equal to their truth and beauty. He has written songs which echo the feelings of every age and condition in life. He personates all the passions of man and all the gradations of affection. He sings the lover hastening through storm and tempest to see the object of his attachment—the swelling stream, the haunted wood, and the suspicious parents are all alike disregarded. He paints him again on an eve in July, when the air is calm, the grass fragrant, and no sound is abroad save the amorous cry of the partridge, enjoying the beauty of the evening, as he steals by some unfrequented way to the trysting thorn, whither his mistress is hastening; or he limns him on a cold and snowy night, enjoying a brief parley with her whom he loves, from a cautiously opened window, which shews her white arm and bright eyes, and the shadow perhaps of a more fortunate lover, which accounts for the marks of feet impressed in the snow on the way to her dwelling. Nor is he always sighing and vowing; some of his heroes answer scorn with scorn, are saucy with the

saucy, and proud with the proud, and comfort themselves with sarcastic comments on woman and her fickleness and folly; others drop all allegiance to that fantastic idol beauty, and while mirth abounds, and "the wine-cup shines in light," find wondrous solace. He laughs at the sex one moment, and adores them the next—he ridicules and satirizes—he vows and entreats—he traduces and he defies—all in a breath. Burns was intimate with the female heart, and with the romantic mode of courtship practised in the pastoral districts of Caledonia. He was early initiated into all the mysteries of rustic love, and had tried his eloquence with such success among the maidens of the land that one of them said, "Open your eyes and shut your ears with Rob Burns, and there's nae fear o' your heart; but close your eyes and open your ears, and you'll lose it."

Of all lyric poets he is the most prolific and various. Of one hundred and sixty songs which he communicated to Johnson's Museum, all, save a score or so, are either his composition, or amended with such skill and genius as to be all but made his own. For Thomson he wrote little short of a hundred. He took a peculiar pleasure in ekeing out and amending the old and imperfect songs of his country. He has exercised his fancy and taste to a greater extent that way than antiquarians either like or seem willing to acknowledge. Scott, who performed for the ballads of Scotland what Burns did for many of her songs, perceived this:—"The Scottish tunes and songs," he remarked, "preserved for Burns that inexpressible charm which they have ever afforded to his countrymen. He entered into the idea of collecting their fragments with the zeal of an enthusiast; and few, whether serious or humorous, passed through his hands without receiving some of those magic touches which, without greatly altering the song, restored its original spirit, or gave it more than it previously possessed. So dexterously are those touches combined with the ancient structure, that the *rifacciamento*, in many instances, could scarcely have been detected without the avowal of the Bard himself. Neither would it be easy to mark his share in the individual ditties. Some he appears to have entirely re-written; to others he added supplementary stanzas; in some he retained only the leading lines and the chorus; and others he merely arranged and ornamented." No one has ever equalled him in these exquisite imitations: he caught up the peculiar spirit of the old song at once: he thought as his elder brother in rhyme thought, and communicated an antique sentiment and tone to all the verses which he added. Finer feeling, purer fancy, more exquisite touches of nature, and more vigorous thoughts were the result of this intercourse. Burns found Scottish Song like a fruit-tree in winter, not dead, though unbudded; nor did he leave it till it was covered with bloom and beauty. He sharpened the sarcasm, deepened the passion, heightened the humour, and abated the indelicacy of his country lyrics.

"To Burns' ear," says Wilson—a high judge in all poetic questions—"the lowly lays of Scotland were familiar, and most dear were they all to his heart. Often had he 'sung aloud old songs that are the music of the heart;' and, some day, to be able himself to breathe such strains was his dearest, his highest ambition. His genius and his moral frame were thus imbued with the spirit of our old traditionary ballad poetry; and, as soon as all his passions were ripe, the voice of song was on all occasions of deep and tender interest—the voice of his daily, his nightly speech. Those old songs were his models: he felt as they felt, and looked up with the same eyes on the same objects. So entirely was their language his language that all the beautiful lines, and half lines, and single words that, because of something in them most exquisitely true to nature, had survived the rest of the compositions to which they had long ago belonged, were sometimes adopted by him, almost unconsciously it might seem, in his finest inspirations; and oftener still sounded in his ear like a key-note, on which he pitched his own plaintive tune of the heart, till the voice and language of the old and new days were but as one." He never failed to surpass what he imitated: he added fruit to the tree, and fragrance to the flower. That his songs are a solace to Scottish hearts in far lands we know from many sources; the poetic testimony of an inspired witness is all we shall call for at present:—

> 'Encamped by Indian rivers wild,
> The soldier, resting on his arms,
> In Burns' carol sweet recalls
> The scenes that blessed him when a child,
> And glows and gladdens at the charms
> Of Scotia's woods and waterfalls.'"

A want of chivalry has been instanced as a radical fault in the lyrics of Burns. He certainly is not of the number who approach beauty with much awe or reverence, and who raise loveliness into an idol for man to fall down and worship. The polished courtesies and romantic affections of high society had not found their way among the maidens of Kyle; the midnight tryste, and the stolen interview—the rapture to meet, and the anguish to part—the secret vow, and the scarce audible whisper, were dear to their bosoms; and they were unacquainted with moving in parallel lines, and breathing sighs into roses, in affairs of the heart. To draw a magic circle of affection round those he loved, which could not be passed without lowering them from the station of angels, forms no part of the lyrical system of Burns' poetic wooing: there is no affectation in him; he speaks like one unconscious of the veneered and

varnished civilities of artificial life; he feels that true love is unacquainted with fashionable distinctions, and in all he has written has thought but of the natural man and woman, and the uninfluenced emotions of the heart. Some have charged him with a want of delicacy—an accusation easily answered: he is rapturous, he is warm, he is impassioned—his heart cannot contain its ecstacies: he glows with emotion as a crystal goblet with wine; but in none of his best songs is there the least indelicacy. Love is with him a leveller: passion and feeling are of themselves as little influenced by fashion and manners as the wind is in blowing, or the sun in shining; chivalry, and even notions of delicacy, are changeable things; our daughters speak no longer with the free tongues of their great grandmothers, and young men no longer challenge wild lions, or keep dangerous castles in honour of their ladies' eyes.

The prose of Burns has much of the original merit of his poetry; but it is seldom so pure, so natural, and so sustained. It abounds with bright bits, fine out-flashings, gentle emotions, and uncommon warmth and ardour. It is very unequal: sometimes it is simple and vigorous: now and then inflated and cumbrous: and he not seldom labours to say weighty and decided things, in which a "double double toil and trouble," sort of labour, is visible. "But hundreds even of his most familiar letters" — I adopt the words of Wilson—"are perfectly artless, though still most eloquent compositions. Simple we may not call them, so rich are they in fancy, so overflowing in feeling, and dashed off in every other paragraph with the easy boldness of a great master, conscious of his strength even at times when, of all things in the world, he was least solicitous about display; while some there are so solemn, so sacred, so religious, that he who can read them with an unstirred heart can have no trust, no hope, in the immortality of the soul." But those who desire to feel him in his strength must taste him in his Scottish spirit. There he spoke the language of life: in English, he spoke that of Education: he had to think in the former before he could express himself in the latter. In the language in which his mother sung and nursed him he excelled: a dialect reckoned barbarous by scholars grew classic and elevated when uttered by the tongue of Robert Burns.

[THE WIDOW, CHILDREN, AND BROTHER OF BURNS.

At the time of Burns's decease, his family consisted of his wife and four sons—Robert, born at Mauchline, in 1786; Francis Wallace, born at Ellisland, April 9, 1791; William Nicol, born at Dumfries, November 21, 1792; and James Glencairn. Francis Wallace, a child of uncommon vivacity, died at the age of fourteen. The three other sons yet (1838) survive. Robert received a good education at the academy of Dumfries, was two Sessions at the university of Edinburgh, and one at the university of Glasgow; and, in 1804, obtained a situation in the Stamp Office, London, where he continued for twenty-nine years, improving a narrow income by teaching the classics and mathematics. It is remarkable that, during that long time he and his mother, though on the best terms, never once met. In 1833, having obtained a superannuation allowance, he retired to Dumfries, where he now lives. He has the dark eyes, large head, and swarthy complexion of his father, and possesses much more than the average of mental capacity. He has written many verses far above mediocrity; but the bent of his mind is towards geometry—a study in which his father was much more accomplished than his biographers seem to have been aware of. William and James went out to India on cadetships, and have each risen to the rank of major in the Company's service. "Wherever these men wander, at home or abroad, they are regarded as the scions of a noble stock, and receive the cordial greetings of hundreds who never saw their faces before, but who account it a happiness to grasp, in friendly pressure, the hand in which circulates the blood of Burns."—*M'Diarmid's Picture of Dumfries.**

The only dependence of Mrs. Burns, after her husband's death, was on an annuity of ten pounds, arising from a benefit society connected with the Excise, the books and other moveable property left to her, and the generosity of the public. The subscription, as we are informed by Dr. Currie, produced seven hundred pounds; and the works of the poet, as edited with singular taste and judgment by that gentleman, brought nearly two thousand more. One half of the latter sum was lent on a bond to a Galloway gentleman, who continued to pay five per cent. for it till a late period. Mrs. Burns was thus enabled to support and educate her family in a manner creditable to the memory of her husband. She continued to reside in the house which had been occupied by her husband and herself, and

——"never changed, nor wished to change, her place."

For many years after her sons had left her to

*Mr. M'Diarmid gives a touching account of the illness and death of one of the daughters of Captain James Glencairn Burns, on her voyage, homewards, from India. "At the funeral of the poor child there was witnessed a most affecting scene. Officers, passengers, and men, were drawn up in regular order on deck; some wore crape round the right arm, others were dressed in the deepest mourning; every head was uncovered; and, as the lashing of the waves on the sides of the coffin proclaimed that the melancholy ceremony had closed, every countenance seemed saddened with grief —every eye moistened with tears. Not a few of the sailors wept outright, natives of Scotland, who, even when far away, had revived their recollections of home and youth by listening to, or repeating, the poetry of Burns."

pursue their fortunes in the world, she lived in a decent and respectable manner, on an income which never amounted to more than £62 per annum. At length, in 1817, at a festival held in Edinburgh to celebrate the birth-day of the bard, Mr. Henry (now Lord) Cockburn, acting as president, it was proposed by Mr. Maule of Panmure (now Lord Panmure), that some permanent addition should be made to the income of the poet's widow. The idea appeared to be favourably received, but the subscription did not fill rapidly. Mr. Maule then said that the burden of the provision should fall upon himself, and immediately executed a bond, entitling Mrs. Burns to an annuity of £50 as long as she lived. This act, together with the generosity of the same gentleman to Nathaniel Gow, in his latter and evil days, must ever endear the name of Lord Panmure to all who feel warmly on the subjects of Scottish poetry and Scottish music.

Mr. Maule's pension had not been enjoyed by the widow more than a year and a half, when her youngest son James attained the rank of Captain with a situation in the Commissariat, and was thus enabled to relieve her from the necessity of being beholden to a stranger's hand for any share of her support. She accordingly resigned the pension. Mr. M'Diarmid, who records these circumstances, adds, in another place, that, during her subsequent years, Mrs. Burns enjoyed an income of about two hundred a-year, great part of which, as not needed by her, she dispensed in charities. Her whole conduct in widowhood was such as to secure universal esteem in the town where she resided. She died, March 26, 1834, in the 68th year of her age, and was buried beside her illustrious husband, in the mausoleum at Dumfries.*

Mr. Gilbert Burns, the early companion and at all times the steadfast friend of the poet, continued to struggle with the miserable glebe of Mossgiel till about the year 1797, when he removed to the farm of Dinning, on the estate of Mr. Monteath of Closeburn, in Nithsdale. The poet had lent him £200 out of the profits of the Edinburgh edition of his works, in order that he might overcome some of his difficulties; and he, some years after, united himself to a Miss Brekonridge, by whom he had a family of six sons and five daughters. On all his boys he bestowed what is called occasional education. In consideration of the support he extended to his widowed mother, the poet seems never to have thought of a reckoning with him for the above sum.

He was a man of sterling sense and sagacity, pious without asceticism or bigotry, and entertaining liberal and enlightened views, without being the least of an enthusiast. His letter to Dr. Currie, given in the ensuing Appendix, shows no mean powers of composition, and embodies nearly all the philanthropic views of human improvement which have been so broadly realised in our own day. We are scarcely more affected by the consideration of the penury under which some of his brother's noblest compositions were penned, than by the reflection that this beautiful letter was the effusion of a man who, with his family, daily wrought long and laboriously under all those circumstances of parsimony which characterise Scottish rural life. Some years after, Mr. Gilbert Burns was appointed by Lady Blantyre to be land-steward or factor upon her estate of Lethington in East-Lothian, to which place he accordingly removed. His conduct in this capacity, during near twenty-five years, was marked by great fidelity and prudence, and gave the most perfect satisfaction to his titled employer. It was not till 1820 that he was enabled to repay, with interest, the money borrowed from his brother in 1788. Being invited by Messrs. Cadell and Davies to superintend, and improve as much as possible, a new edition of the poet's works, he received as much in remuneration for his labour as enabled him to perform this act of duty.

The mother of Robert and Gilbert Burns lived in the household of the latter at Grant's Braes, near Lethington, till 1820, when she died at the age of eighty-eight, and was buried in the churchyard of Bolton. In personal aspect, Robert Burns resembled his mother; Gilbert had the more aquiline features of his father. The portrait of Robert Burns, painted by a Mr. Taylor, and published in an engraved form by Messrs. Constable and Company a few years ago, bore a striking resemblance to Gilbert. This excellent man died at Grant's Braes,

* The household effects of Mrs. Burns were sold by public auction on the 10th and 11th of April, and, from the anxiety of the public to possess relics of this interesting household, brought uncommonly high sums. According to the *Dumfries Courier*, "the auctioneer commenced with small articles, and when he came to a broken copper coffee-pot, there were so many bidders that the price paid exceeded twenty-fold the intrinsic value. A tea-kettle of the same metal succeeded, and reached £2 sterling. Of the linens, a table-cloth, marked 1792, which, speaking commercially, may have been worth half-a-crown or five shillings, was knocked down at £5. 7s. Many other articles commanded handsome prices, and the older and plainer the furniture the better it sold. The rusty iron top of a shower-bath, which Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop sent to the poet when afflicted with rheumatism, was bought by a Carlisle gentleman for £1. 8s.; and a low wooden kitchen chair, on which the late Mrs. Burns sat when nursing her children, was run up to £3. 7s. The crystal and china were much coveted, and brought, in most cases, splendid prices. Even an old fender reached a figure which would go far to buy half a dozen new ones, and every thing, towards the close, attracted notice, down to grey-beards, bottles, and a half-worn pair of bellows. The poet's eight-day clock, made by a Mauchline artist, attracted great attention, from the circumstance that it had frequently been wound up by his own hand. In a few seconds it was bid up to fifteen pounds or guineas, and was finally disposed of for £35. The purchaser had a hard battle to fight; but his spirit was good, and his purse obviously not a light one, and the story ran that he had instructed Mr. Richardson to secure a preference at any sum under £60."

November 8, 1827, aged about sixty-seven years. His sons occupy respectable stations in society. One is factor to Lord Blantyre, and another is minister of the parish of Monkton, near Ayr.

The untimely death of a third, a youth of very promising talents, when on the eve of being admitted to holy orders, is supposed to have hastened the departure of the venerable parent.

Two sisters of Burns, one of whom is by marriage Mrs. Begg, yet survive. They reside in the village of Tranent, East-Lothian.

Through life, and in death, Gilbert Burns maintained, and justified the promise of his virtuous youth, and seems in all respects to have resembled his father, of whom Murdoch, long after he was no more, wrote in language honourable to his own heart:—"O for a world of men of such dispositions: I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honour and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude as it is to extol what are called heroic actions; then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of those we see in Westminster Abbey!"

We conclude this edition of his life in the appropriate words of Lockhart. "Burns, short and painful as were his years, has left behind him a VOLUME in which there is inspiration for every fancy, and music for every mood; which lives and will live in strength and vigour; 'to soothe,' as a generous lover of genius, (Sir Egerton Brydges) has said, 'the sorrows of how many a lover, to inflame the patriotism of how many a soldier, to fan the fires of how many a genius, to disperse the gloom of solitude, appease the agonies of pain, encourage virtue, and shew vice its ugliness!' a volume in which centuries hence, as now, wherever a Scotsman may wander, he will find the dearest consolation of his exile. Already in the language of Childe Harolde, has

GLORY WITHOUT END
SCATTER'D THE CLOUDS AWAY, AND ON THAT NAME ATTEND
THE TEARS AND PRAISES OF ALL TIME!"]

My task is ended—farewell, Robin!
My prentice muse stands sad and sobbin'
To think thy country kept thee scrubbin'
Her barmy barrels,
Of strains immortal mankind robbin',
And thee of laurels.

Let learning's Greekish grubs cry Humph!
Hot zealots groan, cold critics grumph,
And ilka starr'd and gartered sumph
Yawn, hum, and ha;
In glory's pack thou art a trumph,
And sweeps them a'.

Round thee flock'd scholars mony a cluster,
And dominies came in a fluster,
In words three span lang 'gan they bluster
Of classic models,
Of Tully's light and Virgil's lustre,
And shook their noddles.

Ye laugh'd, and muttering, "Learning! d—n her!"
Stood bauldly up, but start or stammer
Wi' Nature's fire for lore and grammar,
And classic rules,
Crush'd them as Thor's triumphant hammer
Smash'd paddock stools.

And thou wert right, and they were wrang—
The sculptor's toil, the poet's sang,
In Greece and Rome frae nature sprang,
And bauld and free,
In sentiment and language strang,
They spake like thee

Thy muse came like a giggling taupie
Dancing her lane; her sangs, sae sappy,
Cheer'd men like drink's inspiring drappie—
Then grave and stern,
High moral truths sublime and happy
She made them learn.

Auld grey-beard Lear, wi' college lantern,
O'er rules of Horace stoitering, venturin'
At song, glides to oblivion saunterin'
And starless night;
Whilst thou, up cleft Parnassus canterin',
Lives on in light.

In light thou liv'st. While birds lo'e simmer,
Wild bees the blossom, buds the timmer,
And man lo'es woman—rosie limmer!
I'll prophecie
Thy glorious halo nought the dimmer
Will ever be.

For me—though both sprung from ae mother,
I'm but a weekly young half brother,
Sae O! forgive my musing swither,
Mid toils benighted,
'Twas lang a wish that nought could smother
To see thee righted.

Frae Kyle, wi' music in her bowers;
Frae fairy glens, where wild Doon pours;
Frae hills, bedropped wi' sunny showers,
On Solway strand,
I've gathered, Burns, thy scattered flowers
Wi' filial hand.

And O! bright and immortal spirit,
If ought that lessens thy rare merit
I've utter'd—like a god thou'lt bear it,
Thou canst but know
Thy stature few or none can peer it
Now born below.

London, 1834. ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

APPENDIX TO THE LIFE OF BURNS.

RULES AND REGULATIONS
TO BE OBSERVED IN
The Bachelors' Club.

1st. The club shall meet at Tarbolton every fourth Monday night, when a question on any subject shall be proposed, disputed points of religion only excepted, in the manner hereafter directed; which question is to be debated in the club, each member taking whatever side he thinks proper.

2d. When the club is met, the president, or, he failing, some one of the members, till he come, shall take his seat: then the other members shall seat themselves; those who are for one side of the question, on the president's right hand; and those who are for the other side on his left—which of them shall have the right hand is to be determined by the president. The president, and four of the members being present, shall have power to transact any ordinary part of the society's business.

3d. The club met and seated, the president shall read the question out of the club's book of records (which book is always to be kept by the president); then the two members nearest the president shall cast lots who of them shall speak first, and, according as the lot shall determine, the member nearest the president on that side shall deliver his opinion, and the member nearest on the other side shall reply to him; then the second member of the side that spoke first; then the second member of the side that spoke second—and so on to the end of the company; but if there be fewer members on the one side than on the other, when all the members of the least side have spoken according to their places, any of them, as they please among themselves, may reply to the remaining members of the opposite side; when both sides have spoken, the president shall give his opinion, after which they may go over it a second or more times, and so continue the question.

4th. The club shall then proceed to the choice of a question for the subject of next night's meeting. The president shall first propose one, and any other member who chooses may propose more questions; and whatever one of them is most agreeable to the majority of the members shall be the subject of debate next-club-night.

5th. The club shall, lastly, elect a new president for the next meeting: the president shall first name one, then any of the club may name another, and whoever of them has the majority of votes shall be duly elected—allowing the president the first vote, and the casting vote upon a par, but none other. Then, after a general toast to mistresses of the club, they shall dismiss.

6th. There shall be no private conversation carried on during the time of debate, nor shall any member interrupt another while he is speaking, under the penalty of a reprimand from the president for the first fault, doubling his share of the reckoning for the second, trebling it for the third, and so in proportion for every other fault; provided always, however, that any member may speak at any time after leave asked, and given by the president. All swearing and profane language, and particularly all obscene and indecent conversation, is strictly prohibited, under the same penalty as aforesaid in the first clause of this article.

7th. No member, on any pretence whatever, shall mention any of the club's affairs to any other person but a brother-member, under the pain of being excluded; and particularly if any member shall reveal any of the speeches or affairs of the club, with a view to ridicule or laugh at any of the rest of the members, he shall be for ever excommunicated from the society; and the rest of the members are desired, as much as possible, to avoid and have no communication with him as a friend or comrade.

8th. Every member shall attend at the meetings, without he can give a proper excuse for not attending; and it is desired that every one who cannot attend will send his excuse with some other member; and he who shall be absent three meetings without sending such excuse shall be summoned to the club-night, when, if he fail to appear, or send an excuse, he shall be excluded.

9th. The club shall not consist of more than sixteen members, all bachelors, belonging to the parish of Tarbolton; except a brother-member marry, and in that case he may be continued, if the majority of the club think proper. No person shall be admitted a member of this society, without the unanimous consent of the club; and any member may withdraw from the club altogether, by giving a notice to the president in writing of his departure.

10th. Every man proper for a member of this society must have a frank, honest, open heart; above any thing dirty or mean; and must be a professed lover of one or more of the female

sex. No haughty self-conceited person, who looks upon himself as superior to the rest of the club, and especially no mean-spirited, worldly mortal, whose only will is to heap up money, shall upon any pretence whatever be admitted. In short, the proper person for this society is a cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who, if he has a friend that is true, and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as genteely to make both ends meet, is just as happy as this world can make him.*

The following interesting letter was addressed to Dr. Currie, the first biographer of Burns. It well deserves a place in this edition :—

A LETTER OF GILBERT BURNS ON EDUCATION.

Dinning, Dumfries-shire, 24th Oct. 1800.

Dear Sir—When I threatened you in my last with a long letter on the subject of the books I recommended to the Mauchline club, and the effects of refinement of taste on the labouring classes of men, I meant merely that I wished to write you on that subject, with the view that, in some future communication to the public, you might take up the subject more at large. I had little expectation, however, that I should overcome my indolence, and the difficulty of arranging my thoughts so far as to put my threat in execution; till some time ago, before I had finished my harvest, having a call from Mr. Ewart, of Manchester, with a message from you, pressing me to the performance of this task, I thought myself no longer at liberty to decline it, and resolved to set about it with my first leisure. I will now therefore endeavour to lay before you what has occurred to my mind, on a subject where people capable of observation, and of placing their remarks in a proper point of view, have seldom an opportunity of making their remarks on real life. In doing this, I may perhaps be led sometimes to write more in the manner of a person communicating information to you which you did not know before, and at other times more in the style of egotism, than I would choose to do to any person in whose candour, and even personal good will, I had less confidence.

There are two several lines of study that open to every man as he enters life: the one, the general science of life, of duty, and of happiness; the other, the particular arts of his employment or situation in society, and the several branches of knowledge therewith connected. This last is certainly indispensable, as nothing can be more disgraceful than ignorance in the way of one's own profession; and, whatever a man's speculative knowledge may be, if he is ill-informed there, he can neither be a useful nor a respectable member of society. It is nevertheless true that 'the proper study of mankind is man;' to consider what duties are incumbent on him as a rational creature, and a member of society; how he may increase or secure his happiness; and how he may prevent or soften the many miseries incident to human life. I think the pursuit of happiness is too frequently confined to the endeavour after the acquisition of wealth. I do not wish to be considered as an idle declaimer against riches, which, after all that can be said against them, will still be considered by men of common sense as objects of importance, and poverty will be felt as a sore evil, after all the fine things that can be said of its advantages; on the contrary, I am of opinion that a great proportion of the miseries of life arise from the want of economy, and a prudent attention to money, or the ill-directed or intemperate pursuit of it. But however valuable riches may be as the means of comfort, independence, and the pleasure of doing good to others, yet I am of opinion that they may be, and frequently are, purchased at too great a cost, and that sacrifices are made in the pursuit which the acquisition cannot compensate. I remember hearing my worthy teacher, Mr. Murdoch, relate an anecdote to my father, which I think sets this matter in a strong light, and perhaps was the origin, or at least tended to promote this way of thinking in me. When Mr. Murdoch left Alloway, he went to teach and reside in the family of an opulent farmer who had a number of sons. A neighbour coming on a visit, in the course of conversation, asked the father how he meant to dispose of his sons. The father replied that he had not determined. The visitor said that were he in his place he would give them all good education and send them abroad, without, perhaps, having a precise idea where. The father objected that many young men lost their health in foreign countries, and many their lives. True, replied the visitor, but, as you have a number of sons, it will be strange if some one of them does not live and make a fortune.

* [It appears that our poet made more preparation than might be supposed for the discussions of the society at Tarbolton. There were found some detached memoranda, evidently prepared for these meetings; and, amongst others, the heads of a speech on the question mentioned in p. 17, in which, as might be expected, he takes the *imprudent* side of the question. The following may serve as a farther specimen of the questions debated in the society at Tarbolton :— "Whether do we derive more happiness from love or friendship?" "Whether between friends, who have no reason to doubt each other's friendship, there should be any reserve?" "Whether is the savage man, or the peasant of a civilised country, in the most happy situation?" "Whether is a young man of the lower ranks of life likeliest to be happy, who has got a good education, and his mind well informed, or he who has just the education and information of those around him?" Currie.]

Let any person who has the feelings of a father comment on this story; but though few will avow, even to themselves, that such views govern their conduct, yet do we not daily see people shipping off their sons (and who would do so by their daughters also, if there were any demand for them), that they may be rich or perish?

The education of the lower classes is seldom considered in any other point of view than as the means of raising them from that station to which they were born, and of making a fortune. I am ignorant of the mysteries of the art of acquiring a fortune without anything to begin with, and cannot calculate, with any degreee of exactness, the difficulties to be surmounted, the mortifications to be suffered, and the degradation of character to be submitted to, in lending one's self to be the minister of other people's vices, or in the practice of rapine, fraud, oppression, or dissimulation, in the progress; but, even when the wished-for end is attained, it may be questioned whether happiness be much increased by the change. When I have seen a fortunate adventurer of the lower ranks of life returned from the East or West Indies, with all the hauteur of a vulgar mind accustomed to be served by slaves, assuming a character which, from early habits of life, he is ill fitted to support—displaying magnificence which raises the envy of some, and the contempt of others—claiming an equality with the great, which they are unwilling to allow—inly pining at the precedence of the hereditary gentry—maddened by the polished insolence of some of the unworthy part of them—seeking pleasure in the society of men who can condescend to flatter him, and listen to his absurdity for the sake of a good dinner and good wine—I cannot avoid concluding that his brother, or companion, who, by a diligent application to the labours of agriculture, or some useful mechanic employment, and the careful husbanding of his gains, has acquired a competence in his station, is a much happier, and, in the eye of a person who can take an enlarged view of mankind, a much more respectable, man.

But the votaries of wealth may be considered as a great number of candidates striving for a few prizes: and, whatever addition the successful may make to their pleasure or happiness, the disappointed will always have more to suffer, I am afraid, than those who abide contented in the station to which they were born. I wish, therefore, the education of the lower classes to be promoted and directed to their improvement as men, as the means of increasing their virtue, and opening to them new and dignified sources of pleasure and happiness. I have heard some people object to the education of the lower classes of men, as rendering them less useful, by abstracting them from their proper business; others, as tending to make them saucy to their superiors, impatient of their condition, and turbulent subjects; while you, with more humanity, have your fears alarmed, lest the delicacy of mind, induced by that sort of education and reading I recommended, should render the evils of their situation insupportable to them. I wish to examine the validity of each of these objections, beginning with the one you have mentioned.

I do not mean to controvert your criticism of my favourite books, the Mirror and Lounger, although I understand there are people, who think themselves judges, who do not agree with you. The acquisition of knowledge, except what is connected with human life and conduct, or the particular business of his employment, does not appear to me to be the fittest pursuit for a peasant. I would say with the poet,

> "How empty learning, and how vain is art,
> Save where it guides the life, or mends the heart!"

There seems to be a considerable latitude in the use of the word taste. I understand it to be the perception and relish of beauty, order, or any other thing, the contemplation of which gives pleasure and delight to the mind. I suppose it is in this sense you wish it to be understood. If I am right, the taste which these books are calculated to cultivate (besides the taste for fine writing, which many of the papers tend to improve and to gratify), is what is proper, consistent, and becoming in human character and conduct, as almost every paper relates to these subjects.

I am sorry I have not these books by me, that I might point out some instances. I remember two; one, the beautiful story of La Roche, where, besides the pleasure one derives from a beautiful simple story, told in M'Kenzie's happiest manner, the mind is led to taste, with heartfelt rapture, the consolation to be derived in deep affliction from habitual devotion and trust in Almighty God. The other, the story of General W——, where the reader is led to have a high relish for that firmness of mind which disregards appearances, the common forms and vanities of life, for the sake of doing justice in a case which was out of the reach of human laws.

Allow me then to remark that if the morality of these books is subordinate to the cultivation of taste; that taste, that refinement of mind and delicacy of sentiment which they are intended to give, are the strongest guard and surest foundation of morality and virtue. Other moralists guard, as it were, the overt act; these papers, by exalting duty into sentiment, are calculated to make every deviation from rectitude and propriety of conduct painful to the mind

> "Whose temper'd powers
> Refine at length, and every passion wears
> A chaster, milder, more attractive mien."

I readily grant you that the refinement of mind which I contend for increases our sensibility to the evils of life; but what station of life is without its evils? There seems to be no such thing as perfect happiness in this world, and we must balance the pleasure and the pain which we derive from taste, before we can properly appreciate it in the case before us. I apprehend, that on a minute examination it will appear that the evils peculiar to the lower ranks of life derive their power to wound us more from the suggestions of false pride, and the "contagion of luxury, weak and vile," than the refinement of our taste. It was a favourite remark of my brothers that there was no part of the constitution of our nature to which we were more indebted than that by which "*custom makes things familiar and easy*" (a copy Mr. Murdoch used to set us to write); and there is little labour which custom will not make easy to a man in health if he is not ashamed of his employment, or does not begin to compare his situation with those he may see going about at their ease.

But the man of enlarged mind feels the respect due to him as a man; he has learned that no employment is dishonourable in itself; that while he performs aright the duties of that station in which God has placed him, he is as great as a king in the eyes of Him whom he is principally desirous to please; for the man of taste, who is constantly obliged to labour, must of necessity be religious. If you teach him only to reason, you may make him an atheist, a demagogue, or any vile thing; but if you teach him to feel, his feelings can only find their proper and natural relief in devotion and religious resignation. He knows that those people who are to appearance at ease are not without their share of evils, and that even toil itself is not destitute of advantages. He listens to the words of his favourite poet:—

"Oh, mortal man, that livest here by toil,
Cease to repine and grudge thy hard estate!
That like an emmet thou art ever moil,
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date;
And, certes, there is for it reason great;
Although sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,
And curse thy star, and early drudge, and late;
Withouten that would come an heavier bale,
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale!"

And while he repeats the words, the grateful recollection comes across his mind how often he has derived ineffable pleasure from the sweet song of "nature's darling child." I can say, from my own experience, that there is no sort of farm-labour inconsistent with the most refined and pleasurable state of the mind that I am acquainted with, thrashing alone excepted. That, indeed, I have always considered as insupportable drudgery, and think the ingenious mechanic who invented the thrashing-machine ought to have a statue among the benefactors of his country, and should be placed in the niche next to the person who introduced the culture of potatoes into this island.

Perhaps the thing of most importance in the education of the common people is to prevent the intrusion of artificial wants. I bless the memory of my worthy father for almost every thing in the dispositions of my mind, and my habits of life, which I can approve of; and for none more than the pains he took to impress my mind with the sentiment, that nothing was more unworthy the character of a man than that his happiness should in the least depend on what he should eat or drink. So early did he impress my mind with this, that, although I was as fond of sweetmeats as children generally are, yet I seldom laid out any of the half-pence which relations or neighbours gave me at fairs in the purchase of them; and, if I did, every mouthful I swallowed was accompanied with shame and remorse; and to this hour I never indulge in the use of any delicacy but I feel a considerable degree of self-reproach and alarm for the degradation of the human character. Such a habit of thinking I consider as of great consequence, both to the virtue and happiness of men in the lower ranks of life. And thus, Sir, I am of opinion that, if their minds are early and deeply impressed with a sense of the dignity of man, as such; with the love of independence and of industry, economy and temperance, as the most obvious means of making themselves independent, and the virtues most becoming their situation, and necessary to their happiness; men in the lower ranks of life may partake of the pleasures to be derived from the perusal of books calculated to improve the mind and refine the taste, without any danger of becoming more unhappy in their situation, or discontented with it. Nor do I think there is any danger of their becoming less useful. There are some hours every day that the most constant labourer is neither at work nor asleep. These hours are either appropriated to amusement or to sloth. If a taste for employing these hours in reading were cultivated, I do not suppose that the return to labour would be more difficult. Every one will allow that the attachment to idle amusements, or even to sloth, has as powerful a tendency to abstract men from their proper business as the attachment to books; while the one dissipates the mind, and the other tends to increase its powers of self-governance.

To those who are afraid that the improvement of the minds of the common people might be dangerous to the state, or the established order of society, I would remark that turbulence and commotion are certainly very inimical to the feelings of a refined mind. Let the matter be brought to the test of experience and observation. Of what description of people are mobs and insurrections composed? are they not uni-

versally owing to the want of enlargement and improvement of mind among the common people? Nay, let any one recollect the characters of those who formed the calmer and more deliberate associations which lately gave so much alarm to the government of this country. I suppose few of the common people who were to be found in such societies had the education and turn of mind I have been endeavouring to recommend. Allow me to suggest one reason for endeavouring to enlighten the minds of the common people. Their morals have hitherto been guarded by a sort of dim religious awe, which from a variety of causes seems wearing off. I think the alteration in this respect considerable, in the short period of my observation. I have already given my opinion of the effects of refinement on morals and virtue. Whenever vulgar minds begin to shake off the dogmas of the religion in which they have been educated, the progress is quick and immediate to downright infidelity; and nothing but refinement of mind can enable them to distinguish between the pure essence of religion and the gross systems which men have been perpetually connecting it with.

In addition to what has already been done for the education of the common people of this country, in the establishment of parish schools, I wish to see the salaries augmented in some proportion to the present expense of living, and the earnings of people of similar rank, endowments, and usefulness, in society; and I hope that the liberality of the present age will be no longer disgraced by refusing, to so useful a class of men such encouragement as may make parish schools worth the attention of men fitted for the important duties of that office. In filling up the vacancies, I would have more attention paid to the candidate's capacity of reading the English language with grace and propriety—to his understanding thoroughly, and having a high relish for, the beauties of English authors, both in poetry and prose—to that good sense and knowledge of human nature which would enable him to acquire some influence on the minds and affections of his scholars—to the general worth of his character, and the love of his king and his country—than to his proficiency in the knowledge of Latin and Greek. I would then have a sort of high English class established, not only for the purpose of teaching the pupils to read in that graceful and agreeable manner that might make them fond of reading, but to make them understand what they read, and discover the beauties of the author, in composition and sentiment. I would have established in every parish a small circulating library, consisting of the books which the young people had read extracts from in the collections they had read at school, and any other books well calculated to refine the mind, improve the moral feelings, recommend the practice of virtue, and communicate such knowledge as might be useful and suitable to the labouring classes of men. I would have the schoolmaster act as librarian; and, in recommending books to his young friends, formerly his pupils, and letting in the light of them upon their young minds, he should have the assistance of the minister. If once such education were become general, the low delights of the public-house, and other scenes of riot and depravity, would be contemned and neglected; while industry, order, cleanliness, and every virtue which taste and independence of mind could recommend, would prevail and flourish. Thus possessed of a virtuous and enlightened populace, with high delight I should consider my native country as at the head of all the nations of the earth, ancient or modern.

Thus, Sir, have I executed my threat to the fullest extent, in regard to the length of my letter. If I had not presumed on doing it more to my liking, I should not have undertaken it; but I have not time to attempt it anew; nor, if I would, am I certain that I should succeed any better. I have learned to have less confidence in my capacity of writing on such subjects.

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient,
and much obliged humble servant,
GILBERT BURNS.

LETTER FROM MR. GRAY*
TO
GILBERT BURNS,

CONTAINING OBSERVATIONS ON THE LAST THREE YEARS OF THE POET'S LIFE.

IT was my good fortune to be introduced to the poet soon after I went to Dumfries. This was early in 1794, and I saw him often and intimately during the remainder of his life. I have often been with him in his scenes of merriment, passing with him the social hour. I have

* Mr. Gray, the friend of Burns, was master of the High-school of Dumfries all the time that Burns was there, saw much of him, and was greatly attached to him. He was married to Miss Mary Phillips, eldest sister of my wife. She was the mother of his family, now mostly settled in India. From Dumfries he was translated to the High-school of Edinburgh, where he taught with singular success for upwards of twenty years; but, being disappointed, as he thought very unfairly, in obtaining the rectorship, he left that, and was made rector of the academy of Belfast. There he entered into holy orders, and soon after went out to India as a chaplain in the Honourable East India Company's service. He was settled in Cutch, up nigh to the mouth of the Indus, and was greatly beloved by all for the primitive simplicity of his heart and manners. He was constituted tutor to the prince of that province, the first Christian who was ever so honoured in the East. He died there in September, 1830, deeply regretted both at home and abroad. He was the author of 'Cuna of Cheyd,' and 'The Sabbath among the Mountains,' besides innumerable miscellaneous pieces. He has, moreover, left behind him 'India,'—a poem in MS., and a translation of the Gospels into the Cutch dialect of the Hindostanee. He was a man of genius; but his genius was that of a meteor, it wanted steadying. A kinder and more disinterested heart than his never beat in a human bosom. He is the fifteenth bard of the 'Queen's Wake,' which see for his character."—HOGG.

been delighted by the constant flashes of a brilliant wit, playful or caustic, as the occasion required; but never disgusted by anything coarse, vicious, or vulgar. I have not unfrequently enjoyed with him the morning walk—seen him clear and unclouded. I was astonished by the extent and promptitude of his information—by his keen inspection into human character—by the natural, warm, and energetic flow of his eloquence—and by the daring flights of his imagination. I have often seen him pourtray, with a pencil dipped in the colours of the rainbow, every thing fair, great, or sublime, in human character or nature at large; and along with those, I ever heard him the zealous advocate of humanity, religion, virtue, and freedom. On these occasions I have heard him quote the English poets, from Shakspeare down to Cowper; while their finest passages seemed to acquire new beauty from his energetic recitation. His countenance, on these occasions, would brighten, and his large dark eyes would sparkle with delight. At other times he would roll them over the purple tints of the morning sky, or the varied beauties of a fine landscape; while he would burst out into glowing descriptions, or enthusiastic strains of adoration, worthy of the royal Hebrew bard.

He seemed to me to frequent convivial parties from the same feelings with which he wrote poetry, because nature had eminently qualified him to shine there, and he never on any occasion indulged in solitary drinking. He was always the living spirit of the company, and, by the communications of his genius, seemed to animate every one present with a portion of his own fire. He indulged in the sally of wit and humour, of striking originality, and sometimes of bitter sarcasm, but always free from the least taint of grossness. I was, from the commencement of my acquaintance with him, struck with his aversion to all kinds of indelicacy, and have seen him dazzle and delight a party for hours together by the brilliancy and rapidity of his flashes, without even an allusion that could give offence to vestal purity.

I often met him at breakfast parties, which were then customary at Dumfries; and on these occasions, if he had been suffering from midnight excesses, it must have been apparent. But his whole air was that of one who had enjoyed refreshing slumbers, and who arose happy in himself, and to diffuse happiness on all around him; his complexion was fresh and clear, his eye brilliant, his whole frame vigorous and elastic, and his imagination ever on the wing. His morning conversations were marked by an impassioned eloquence that seemed to flow from immediate inspiration, and shed an atmosphere of light and beauty around every thing it touched, alternately melting and elevating the souls of all who heard him. In our solitary walks on a summer morning, the simplest floweret by the way-side, every sight of rural simplicity and happiness, every creature that seemed to drink the joy of the seasons, awakened the sympathy of his heart, which flowed in spontaneous music from his lips; and every new opening of the beauty or the magnificence of the scene before him called forth the poetry of his soul.

As a friend, no views of selfishness ever made him faithless to those whom he had once honoured with that name—ever ready to aid them by the wisdom of his counsels, when his means were inadequate to their relief; and, by a delicate sympathy, to soothe the sufferings and the sorrows he could not heal. As a citizen he never neglected a single professional duty; and even on the slender income of an excise officer, he never contracted a single debt he could not pay. He could submit to privations, but could not brook the dependence of owing anything to any man on earth. To the poor he was liberal beyond his limited means, and the cry of the unfortunate was never addressed to him in vain, and when he could not himself relieve their necessities, he was often known, by a pathetic recital of their misfortunes, to draw the tear and open the purse of those who were not famed either for tenderness of heart or charity: on such occasions it was impossible to resist his solicitations.

He was a kind and an attentive father, and took great delight in spending his evenings in the cultivation of the minds of his children. Their education was the grand object of his life, and he did not, like most parents, think it sufficient to send them to public schools; he was their private instructor; and even at that early age, bestowed great pains in training their minds to habits of thought and reflection, and in keeping them pure from every form of vice. This he considered a sacred duty, and never, to his last illness, relaxed in his diligence.

With his eldest son, a boy of not more than nine years of age, he had read many of the favourite poets, and some of the best historians, of our language; and, what is more remarkable, gave him considerable aid in the study of Latin. This boy attended the grammar school of Dumfries, and soon attracted my notice by the strength of his talent, and the ardour of his ambition. Before he had been a year at school, I thought it right to advance him a form; and he began to read Cæsar, and gave me translations of that Author of such beauty as, I confess, surprised me. On enquiry, I found that his father made him turn over his dictionary till he was able to translate to him the passage in such a way that he could gather the Author's meaning, and that it was to him he owed that polished and forcible English with which I was so greatly struck. I have mentioned this incident merely to shew what minute attention he paid to this important branch of parental duty.

Many insinuations have been made against his character as a husband; but I am happy to say that I have in exculpation the direct evidence of Mrs. Burns herself, who, among many amiable and respectable qualities, ranks a veneration for the memory of her departed husband, whom she never named, but in terms of the profoundest respect and the deepest regret, to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his kindnesses to herself, not as the momentary overflowings of the heart, in a season of penitence for offences generously forgiven, but an habitual tenderness that ended only with his life. I place this evidence, which I am proud to bring forward on her own authority, against a thousand anonymous calumnies.

To the very end of his existence, all the powers of his mind were as vigorous as in the blossom of their spring; and it may be asked, if the numerous songs written for Mr. Thomson's collection, which were his last compositions, and by many considered the glory of his genius, indicate any intellectual decay? I saw him four days before he died, and, though the hand of death was obviously upon him, he repeated to me a little poem he had composed the day before, full of energy and tenderness.

Your brother partook, in an eminent degree, of the virtues and the vices of the poetical temperament. He was often hurried into error by the impetuosity of his passions, but he was never their slave; he was often led astray by the meteor lights of pleasure, but he never lost sight of the right way, to which he was ever eager to return; and, amid all his wanderings and his self-conflicts, his heart was pure, and his principles untainted. Though he was often well nigh broken-hearted by the severity of his fate, yet he was never heard to complain; and, had he been an unconnected individual, he would have bid defiance to fortune; but his sorrows for his wife and children, for whom he suffered much, and feared more, were keen and acute: yet unmingled with selfishness. All his life he had to maintain a hard struggle with cares; and he often had to labour under those depressions to which genius is subject; yet his spirit never stooped from its lofty career, and, to the very end of his warfare with himself and with fortune, he continued strong in its independence. The love of posthumous fame was the master passion of his soul, which kept all others in subordination, and prevented them from running into that disorder which his great susceptibility to all those objects which pleased his fancy or interested his heart, and the vivacity of all his emotions might, without this regulating principle, have produced. Amidst the darkest overshadowings of his fate, or the most alluring temptations of pleasure, it was his consoling and leading star; and, as it directed his eye to distant ages, it was often his only support in the one, and the most powerful check against the dangerous indulgence of the other. Possessing an eloquence that might have guided the councils of nations, and which would have been eagerly courted by any party, he would have perished by famine rather than submit to the degradation of becoming the tool of faction. It is a known fact that he rejected a sum equal to his whole annual income, for the support of those measures which he thought most for the interests of the country. He had a loftiness of sentiment that raised him above making his genius a hireling even in a good cause, and his laurels were never stained by a single act of venality.

Though his chosen companions were not more remarkable for talent than for the respectability of their character, and the purity of their lives, and many ladies, of the most delicate and cultivated minds and elegant manners, were numbered among his friends, who clung to him through good and through bad report, and still cherish an affectionate and enthusiastic regard for his memory, yet has he been accused of being addicted to low company. Qualified for the noblest employments, he was condemned to drudge in the lowest occupations—often in scenes where to avoid contamination was an effort of virtue. Accumulated misfortunes, and the cruelty of mankind, actually broke his heart, and hurried him to a premature grave, which to him has been no sanctuary, for the voice of calumny has been heard even there; but prejudices will pass away, and posterity will do him justice. I shall deem it the proudest work of my life, if my feeble efforts shall be in the slightest degree instrumental in correcting erroneous opinions, which have been too long and too widely circulated.

I am, &c.,
JAMES GRAY.

Phrenological Developement
OF
BURNS.

THE CRANIUM OF BURNS.

AT the opening of the Mausoleum, March 1834, for the interment of Mrs. Burns, it was resolved by some citizens of Dumfries, with the concurrence of the nearest relative of the widow, to raise the cranium of the poet from the grave, and have a cast moulded from it, with a view to gratifying the interest likely to be felt by the students of phrenology respecting its peculiar developement. This purpose was carried into effect during the night between the 31st March and the 1st April, and the following is the description of the cranium, drawn up at the time by Mr. A. Blacklock, surgeon, one of the individuals present:—

"The cranial bones were perfect in every respect, if we except a little erosion of their

external table, and firmly held together by their sutures; even the delicate bones of the orbits, with the trifling exception of the *os unguis* in the left, were sound, and uninjured by death and the grave. The superior maxillary bones still retained the four most posterior teeth on each side, including the dentes sapientiæ, and all without spot or blemish; the incisores, cuspidati, &c., had, in all probability, recently dropped from the jaw, for the alveoli were but little decayed. The bones of the face and palate were also sound. Some small portions of black hair, with a very few grey hairs intermixed, were observed while detaching some extraneous matter from the occiput. Indeed, nothing could exceed the high state of preservation in which we found the bones of the cranium, or offer a fairer opportunity of supplying what has so long been desiderated by phrenologists—a correct model of our immortal poet's head: and, in order to accomplish this in the most accurate and satisfactory manner, every particle of sand, or other foreign body, was carefully washed off, and the plaster of Paris applied with all the tact and accuracy of an experienced artist. The cast is admirably taken, and cannot fail to prove highly interesting to phrenologists and others.

Having completed our intention, the skull, securely enclosed in a leaden case, was again committed to the earth, precisely where we found it. ARCHD. BLACKLOCK."

A cast from the skull having been transmitted to the Phrenological Society of Edinburgh, the following view of the cerebral developement of Burns was drawn up by Mr. George Combe, and published in connection with four views of the cranium:—

"I.—DIMENSIONS OF THE SKULL.

	Inches.
Greatest circumference,	22¼
From Occipital Spine to Individuality, over the top of the head,	14
—— Ear to ear vertically over the top of the head,	13
—— Philoprogenitiveness to Individuality, (greatest length),	8
—— Concentrativeness to Comparison,	7⅛
—— Ear to Philoprogenitiveness,	4⅞
—— Individuality,	4¾
—— Benevolence,	5½
—— Firmness,	5½
—— Destructiveness to Destructiveness,	5¾
—— Secretiveness to Secretiveness,	5⅞
—— Cautiousness to Cautiousness,	5½
—— Ideality to Ideality,	4⅝
—— Constructiveness to Constructiveness,	4½
—— Mastoid Process to Mastoid Process,	4¾

II.—DEVELOPEMENT OF THE ORGANS.

	Scale.
1. Amativeness, rather large	16
2. Philoprogenitiveness, very large,	20
3. Concentrativeness, large,	18
4. Adhesiveness, very large.	20
5. Combativeness, very large,	20
6. Destructiveness, large,	18
7. Secretiveness, large	19
8. Acquisitiveness, rather large,	16
9. Constructiveness, full,	15
10. Self-Esteem, large,	18
11. Love of Approbation, very large,	20
12. Cautiousness, large,	19
13. Benevolence, very large,	20
14. Veneration, large,	18
15. Firmness, full,	15
16. Conscientiousness, full	15
17. Hope, full,	14
18. Wonder, large,	18
19. Ideality, large,	18
20. Wit, or Mirthfulness, full,	15
21. Imitation, large,	19
22. Individuality, large,	19
23. Form, rather large,	16
24. Size, rather large,	17
25. Weight, rather large,	16
26. Colouring, rather large,	16
27. Locality, large,	18
28. Number, rather full,	12
29. Order, full,	14
30. Eventuality, large,	18
31. Time, rather large,	16
32. Tune, full,	15
33. Language, uncertain.	
34. Comparison, rather large,	17
35. Causality, large,	18

The scale of the organs indicates their relative proportions to each other; 2 is idiotcy—10 moderate—14 full—18 large; and 20 very large.

The cast of a skull does not show the temperament of the individual, but the portraits of Burns indicate the bilious and nervous temperaments, the sources of strength, activity, and susceptibility; and the descriptions given by his contemporaries of his beaming and energetic eye, and the rapidity and impetuosity of his manifestations, establish the inference that his brain was active and susceptible.

Size in the brain, other conditions being equal, is the measure of mental power. The skull of Burns indicates a large brain. The length is eight, and the greatest breadth nearly six inches. The circumference is 22¼ inches. These measurements exceed the average of Scotch living heads, *including the integuments*, for which four-eighths of an inch may be allowed.

The brain of Burns, therefore, possessed the two elements of power and activity.

The portions of the brain which manifest the animal propensities are uncommonly large, indicating strong passions, and great energy in action under their influence. The group of organs manifesting the domestic affections

(Amativeness, Philoprogenitiveness, and Adhesiveness) is large; Philoprogenitiveness uncommonly so for a male head. The organs of Combativeness and Destructiveness are large, bespeaking great heat of temper, impatience, and liability to irritation.

Secretiveness and Cautiousness are both large, and would confer considerable power of restraint, where he felt restraint to be necessary.

Acquisitiveness, Self-Esteem, and Love of Approbation, are also in ample endowment, although the first is less than the other two; these feelings give the love of property, a high consideration of self, and desire of the esteem of others. The first quality will not be so readily conceded to Burns as the second and third, which, indeed, were much stronger; but the phrenologist records what is presented by nature, in full confidence that the manifestations, when the character is correctly understood, will be found to correspond with the developement, and he states that the brain indicates considerable love of property.

The organs of the moral sentiments are also largely developed. Ideality, Wonder, Imitation, and Benevolence, are the largest in size. Veneration also is large. Conscientiousness, Firmness, and Hope, are full.

The Knowing organs, or those of perceptive intellect, are large; and the organs of Reflection are also considerable, but less than the former. Causality is larger than Comparison, and Wit is less than either.

The skull indicates the combination of strong animal passions with equally powerful moral emotions. If the natural morality had been less, the endowment of the propensities is sufficient to have constituted a character of the most desperate description. The combination, as it exists, bespeaks a mind extremely subject to contending emotions—capable of great good, or great evil—and encompassed with vast difficulties in preserving a steady, even, onward course of practical morality.

In the combination of very large Philoprogenitiveness and Adhesiveness, with very large Benevolence and large Ideality, we find the elements of that exquisite tenderness and refinement, which Burns so frequently manifested even when at the worst stage of his career. In the combination of great Combativeness, Destructiveness, and Self-Esteem, we find the fundamental qualities which inspired "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," and similar productions.

The combination of large Secretiveness, Imitation, and the perceptive organs, gives the elements of his dramatic talent and humour. The skull indicates a decided talent for Humour, but less for Wit. The public are apt to confound the talents for Wit and Humour. The metaphysicians, however, have distinguished them, and in the phrenological works their different elements are pointed out. Burns possessed the talent for satire; Destructiveness, added to the combination which gives Humour, produces it.

An unskilful observer, looking at the forehead, might suppose it to be moderate in size; but when the dimensions of the anterior lobe, in both length and breadth, are attended to, the Intellectual organs will be recognised to have been large. The anterior lobe projects so much that it gives an appearance of narrowness to the forehead which is not real. This is the cause, also, why Benevolence appears to lie farther back than usual. An anterior lobe of this magnitude indicates great intellectual power. The combination of large Perceptive and Reflecting organs (Causality predominant), with large Concentrativeness and large organs of the feelings, gives that sagacity and vigorous common sense for which Burns was distinguished.

The skull rises high above Causality, and spreads wide in the region of Ideality; the strength of his moral feelings lay in that region.

The combination of large organs and the Animal Propensities, with little Cautiousness, and only full Hope, together with the unfavourable circumstances in which he was placed, accounts for the melancholy and internal unhappiness with which Burns was so frequently afflicted. This melancholy was rendered still deeper by bad health.

The combination of Acquisitiveness, Cautiousness, Love of Approbation, and Conscientiousness, is the source of his keen feelings in regard to pecuniary independence. The great power of his Animal Propensities would give him strong temptations to waste; but the combination just mentioned would impose a powerful restraint. The head indicates the elements of an economical character, and it is known that he died free from debt, notwithstanding the smallness of his salary.

No phrenologist can look upon this head, and consider the circumstances in which Burns was placed, without vivid feelings of regret. Burns must have walked the earth with a consciousness of great superiority over his associates in the station in which he was placed—of powers calculated for a far higher sphere than that which he was able to reach, and of passions which he could with difficulty restrain, and which it was fatal to indulge. If he had been placed from infancy in the higher ranks of life, liberally educated, and employed in pursuits corresponding to his powers, the inferior portion of his nature would have lost part of its energy, while his better qualities would have assumed a decided and permanent superiority.

A more elaborate paper on the skull of Burns appeared in the Phrenological Journal, No. XLI. from the pen of Mr. Robert Cox. This gentleman endeavours to show that the charac-

ter of Burns was in conformity with the full developement of acquisitiveness. "According to his own descriptions," says Mr. Cox, "he was a man who 'had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it.' That his art in making money was sufficiently moderate there can be no doubt, for he was engaged in occupations which his soul loathed, and thought it below his dignity to accept of pecuniary remuneration for some of his most laborious literary performances. He was, however, by no means insensible to the value of money, and never threw it away. On the contrary, he was remarkably frugal, except when feelings stronger than acquisitiveness came into play—such as benevolence, adhesiveness, and love of approbation; the organs of all which are very large, while acquisitiveness is only rather large. During his residence at Mossgiel, where his revenue was not more than £70, his expenses, as Gilbert mentions, 'never in any one year exceeded his slender income.' It is also well known that he did not leave behind him a shilling of debt; and I have learned from good authority that his household was much more frugally managed at Dumfries than at Ellisland—as in the former place, but not in the latter, he had it in his power to exercise a personal control over the expenditure. I have been told also, that, after his death, the domestic expenses were greater than when he was alive. These facts are all consistent with a considerable developement of acquisitiveness, for, when that organ is small, there is habitual inattention to pecuniary concerns, even although the love of independence and dislike to ask a favour be strong. The indifference with respect to money, which Burns occasionally ascribes to himself, appears therefore to savour of affectation—a failing into which he was not unfrequently led by love of approbation and secretiveness. Indeed, in one of his letters to Miss Chalmers, he expressly intimates a wish to be rich." The whole of this essay is highly worthy of perusal by all who take an interest in the character of the Ayr-shire bard.]

POEMS WRITTEN IN MEMORY OF BURNS.

[The following poems form part of a vast number of verses written at various periods and in various moods in memory of Burns: too few perhaps are selected; but to admit all would be to print a volume.]

A POEM ADDRESSED TO BURNS BY MR. TELFORD.*

"A great number of manuscript poems," says Dr. Currie, "were found among the papers of Burns, addressed to him by admirers of his genius, from different parts of Britain, as well as from Ireland and America. Among these was a poetical epistle from Mr. Telford, of Shrewsbury, of superior merit. It is written in the dialect of Scotland (of which country Mr. Telford is a native) and in the versification generally employed by our Poet himself. Its object was to recommend to him other subjects of a serious nature, similar to that of 'the Cotter's Saturday Night;' and the reader will find that the advice was happily enforced by example:—

Pursue, O Burns! thy happy style,
"Those manner-painting strains," that while
They bear me northward mony a mile,
Recall the days
When tender joys, with pleasing smile,
Blest my young ways.

I see my fond companions rise,
I join the happy village joys,
I see our green hills touch the skies,
And thro' the woods
I hear the river's rushing noise,
Its roaring floods.†

No distant Swiss with warmer glow,
E'er heard his native music flow,
Nor could his wishes stronger grow,
Than still have mine,
When up this ancient mount‡ I go
With songs of thine.

O happy Bard! thy gen'rous flame,
Was given to raise thy country's fame;
For this thy charming numbers came,
Thy matchless lays;
Then sing and save her virtuous name,
To latest days.

* * * * *

But mony a theme awaits thy muse,
Fine as thy Cotter's sacred views,
Then in such verse thy soul infuse,
With holy air,
And sing the course the pious chuse,
With all thy care.

How with religious awe imprest,
They open lay upon his breast,
And youth and age with fears distrest,
All due prepare,
The symbols of eternal rest,
Devout to share.§

* The late eminent engineer.

† The banks of the Esk, in Dumfries-shire, are here alluded to.

‡ A beautiful little mount, which stands a little before, or rather forms a part of, Shrewsbury Castle, a seat of Sir William Pulteney, Bart.

§ The sacrament, generally administered in the country parishes of Scotland in the open air.

How down ilk lang withdrawing hill,
Successive crowds the valleys fill,
While pure religious converse still
Beguiles the way,
And gives a cast to youthful will,
To suit the day.

How placed along the sacred board,
Their hoary pastor's looks ador'd;
His voice with peace and blessings stor'd,
Sent from above;
And faith, and hope, and joy afford,
And boundless love.

O'er this with warm seraphic glow,
Celestial beings pleased bow,
And, whisper'd, hear the holy vow,
'Mid grateful tears;
And mark amid such scenes below
Their future peers.

* * * * *

O mark the awful, solemn scene!*
When hoary winter clothes the plain,
Along the snowy hills is seen
Approaching slow,
In mourning weeds the village train,
In silent woe.

Some much-respected brother's bier
(By turns in pious task they share)
With heavy hearts they forward bear
Along the path;
Where nei'bours saw, in dusky air,†
The light of death.

And when they pass the rocky brow,
Where binwood bushes o'er them flow,
And move around the rising knowe,
Where far away
The kirk-yard trees are seen to grow,
By th' water brae.

Assembled round the narrow grave,
While o'er them wintry tempests rave,
In the cold wind their grey locks wave,
As low they lay
Their brother's body 'mongst the lave
Of parent clay.

Expressive looks from each declare
The griefs within their bosoms bear,
One holy vow devout they share,
Then home return,
And think o'er all the virtues fair
Of him they mourn.

* * * * *

Say how, by early lessons taught,
(Truth's pleasing air is willing caught)
Congenial to th' untainted thought,
The shepherd boy,
Who tends his flocks on lonely height,
Feels holy joy.

Is aught on earth so lovely known,
On sabbath morn, and far alone,
His guileless soul all naked shown
Before his God?
Such pray'rs must welcome reach the throne,
And blest abode.

O tell! with what a heartfelt joy,
The parent eyes the virtuous boy;
And all his constant kind employ
Is how to give
The best of lear he can enjoy,
As means to live.

The parish school, its curious site,
The master who can clear indite,
And lead him on to count and write,
Demand thy care;
Nor pass the ploughman's school at night
Without a share.

Nor yet the tenty curious lad,
Who o'er the ingle hings his head,
And begs of nei'bours books to read;
For hence arise
Thy country's sons who far are spread,
Baith bauld and wise.

* * * * *

The bonny lasses, as they spin,
Perhaps with Allan's sangs begin,
How Tay and Tweed smooth flowing rin
Thro' flow'ry hows;
Where shepherd lads their sweethearts win
With earnest vows.

Or maybe, Burns, thy thrilling page,
May a' their virtuous thoughts engage,
While playful youth and placid age
In concert join
To bless the Bard who, gay or sage,
Improves the mind.

* * * * *

Long may their harmless, simple ways,
Nature's own pure emotions raise;
May still the dear romantic blaze
Of purest love,
Their bosoms warm to latest days,
And aye improve.

May still each fond attachment glow,
O'er woods, o'er streams, o'er hills of snow,
May rugged rocks still dearer grow,
And may their souls
Even love the warlock glens which through
The tempest howls.

To eternize such themes as these,
And all their happy manners seize,
Will every virtuous bosom please,
And high in fame,
To future times will justly raise
Thy patriot name.

---

* A Scottish funeral.

† This alludes to a superstition prevalent in Eskdale and Annandale, that a light precedes in the night every funeral, marking the precise path it is to pass.

While all the venal tribes decay,
That bask in flatt'ry's flaunting ray,
The noisome vermin of a day,
Thy works shall gain
O'er every mind a boundless sway,
And lasting reign.

When winter binds the harden'd plains,
Around each hearth, the hoary swains,
Shall teach the rising youth thy strains,
And anxious say
Our blessing with our sons remains,
And BURNS'S LAY!

ON THE DEATH OF BURNS.

BY

WILLIAM ROSCOE.

REAR high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And, SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red.
But ah! what poet now shall tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he, the sweetest bard is dead
That ever breath'd the soothing strain?

As green thy towering pines may grow,
As clear thy streams may speed along,
As bright thy summer suns may glow,
As gaily charm thy feathery throng;
But now, unheeded is the song,
And dull and lifeless all around,
For his wild harp lies all unstrung,
And cold the hand that wak'd its sound.

What tho' thy vigorous offspring rise,
In arts, in arms, thy sons excel;
Tho' beauty in thy daughters' eyes,
And health in every feature dwell;
Yet who shall now their praises tell,
In strains impassion'd, fond and free,
Since he no more the song shall swell
To love, and liberty, and thee?

With step-dame eye and frown severe
His hapless youth why didst thou view?
For all thy joys to him were dear,
And all his vows to thee were due:
Nor greater bliss his bosom knew,
In opening youth's delightful prime,
Than when thy favoring ear he drew
To listen to his chaunted rhyme.

Thy lonely wastes and frowning skies
To him were all with rapture fraught;
He heard with joy the tempest rise
That wak'd him to sublimer thought:
And oft thy winding dells he sought,
Where wild flowers pour'd their rathe perfume,
And with sincere devotion brought
To thee the summer's earliest bloom.

But ah! no fond paternal smile
His unprotected youth enjoy'd;
His limbs inur'd to early toil,
His days with early hardships tried:
And more to mark the gloomy void,
And bid him feel his misery,
Before his infant eyes would glide
Day-dreams of immortality.

Yet, not by cold neglect depress'd,
With sinewy arm he turn'd the soil,
Sunk with the evening sun to rest,
And met at morn his earliest smile.
Wak'd by his rustic pipe, meanwhile
The powers of fancy came along,
And sooth'd his lengthen'd hours of toil
With native wit and sprightly song.

—Ah! days of bliss too swiftly fled,
When vigorous health from labour springs,
And bland contentment smoothes the bed,
And sleep his ready opiate brings;
And hovering round on airy wings
Float the light forms of young desire,
That of unutterable things
The soft and shadowy hope inspire.

Now spells of mightier power prepare,
Bid brighter phantoms round him dance;
Let flattery spread her viewless snare,
And fame attract his vagrant glance;
Let sprightly pleasure too advance,
Unveil'd her eyes, unclasp'd her zone,
'Till lost in love's delirious trance
He scorn the joys his youth has known.

Let friendship pour her brightest blaze,
Expanding all the bloom of soul;
And mirth concenter all her rays,
And point them from the sparkling bowl;
And let the careless moments roll
In social pleasures unconfin'd,
And confidence that spurns control
Unlock the inmost springs of mind;

And lead his steps those bowers among,
Where elegance with splendor vies,
Or science bids her favor'd throng
To more refin'd sensations rise:
Beyond the peasant's humbler joys,
And freed from each laborious strife,
There let him learn the bliss to prize
That waits the sons of polish'd life.

Then, whilst his throbbing veins beat high
With every impulse of delight,
Dash from his lips the cup of joy,
And shroud the scene in shades of night;
And let despair, with wizard light,
Disclose the yawning gulf below,
And pour incessant on his sight
Her specter'd ills and shapes of woe:

And shew beneath a cheerless shed,
With sorrowing heart and streaming eyes,
In silent grief where droops her head,
The partner of his early joys;

And let his infant's tender cries
His fond parental succour claim,
And bid him hear in agonies
A husband's and a father's name.

'Tis done, the powerful charm succeeds;
His high reluctant spirit bends;
In bitterness of soul he bleeds,
Nor longer with his fate contends,
An idiot laugh the welkin rends
As genius thus degraded lies;
'Till pitying Heaven the veil extends
That shrouds the Poet's ardent eyes.

—Rear high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And, SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red;
But never more shall poet tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he, the sweetest bard is dead
That ever breath'd the soothing strain.

ODE TO THE MEMORY OF BURNS.

BY

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

Soul of the Poet! wheresoe'er,
Reclaimed from earth, thy genius plume
Her wings of immortality,
Suspend thy harp in happier sphere,
And with thine influence illume
The gladness of our jubilee.

And fly like fiends from secret spell,
Discord and strife at Burns's name,
Exorcised by his memory;
For he was chief of bards that swell
The heart with songs of social flame
And high delicious revelry.

And love's own strain to him was given
To warble all its extacies
With Pythian words, unsought, unwilled
Love, the surviving gift of heaven,
The choicest sweet of paradise
In life's else bitter cup distilled.

Who that has melted o'er his lay
To Mary's soul in heaven above,
But pictured sees, in fancy strong,
The landscape and the livelong day
That smiled upon their mutual love,—
Who, that has felt, forgets the song?

Nor skilled one flame above to fan
His country's high-souled peasantry;
What patriot pride he taught;—how much
To weigh the inborn worth of man!
And rustic life and poverty
Grow beautiful beneath his touch.

Him in his clay-built cot the muse
Entranced, and showed him all the forms
Of fairy-light and wizard gloom,
(That only gifted poet views)
The genii of the floods and storms,
And martial shades from glory's tomb.

On Bannock-field what thoughts arouse
The swain whom Burns's song inspires?
Beat not his Caledonian veins,
As o'er the heroic turf he ploughs,
With all the spirit of his sires,
And all their scorn of death and chains?

And see the Scottish exile, tanned
By many a far and foreign clime,
Bend o'er his home-born verse and weep,
In memory of his native land,
With love that scorns the lapse of time,
And ties that stretch beyond the deep.

Encamped by Indian rivers wild,
The soldier resting on his arms,
In Burns's carol sweet recals
The scenes that blest him when a child,
And glows and gladdens at the charms
Of Scotia's woods and waterfalls.

O deem not, midst this worldly strife,
An idle art the poet brings;
Let high philosophy controul,
And sages calm the stream of life;
'Tis he refines its fountain springs,
The nobler passions of the soul.

It is the muse that consecrates
The native banner of the brave,
Unfurling at the trumpet's breath
Rose, thistle, harp—'tis she elates
To sweep the field or ride the wave,
A sunburst in the storm of death.

And thou, young hero, when thy pall
Is crossed with mournful sword and plume,
When public grief begins to fade,
And only tears of kindred fall,
Who but the bard shall dress thy tomb,
And greet with fame thy gallant shade?

Such was the soldier;—Burns, forgive
That sorrows of mine own intrude
In strains to thy great memory due.
In verse like thine, oh! could he live
The friend I mourned, the brave, the good,
Edward* that died at Waterloo!

---

* Major Edward Hodge, of the 7th Hussars, who fell at the head of his squadron in the attack on the Polish lancers.

ADDRESS TO THE SONS OF BURNS ON VISITING HIS GRAVE.

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Mid crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns:
Sons of the bard my heart still mourns
With sorrow true;
And more would grieve, but that it turns
Trembling to you!

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life's hill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display,
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Hath nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware!
But if the poet's wit ye share,
Like him can speed
The social hour—for tenfold care
There will be need.

Even honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
Your steps pursue;
And of your father's name will make
A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire,
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
With service meet;
There seek the genius of your sire,
His spirit greet.

Or where mid "lonely heights and hows"
He paid to nature tuneful vows;
Or wiped his honourable brows,
Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs
Upturned the soil.

His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way;
But ne'er to a seductive lay
Let faith be given;
Nor deem that "light which leads astray
Is light from heaven."

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;
Be independent, generous, brave;
Your father such example gave,
And such revere;
But be admonished by his grave,
And think and fear!

1803.

TO A FRIEND

WHO HAD DECLARED HIS INTENTION OF WRITING NO MORE POETRY.

BY

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

Dear Charles, whilst yet thou wert a babe, I [ween
That genius plunged thee in that wizard fount
Hight Castalie: and (sureties of thy faith)
That Pity and Simplicity stood by, [nounce
And promised for thee that thou shouldst re-
The world's low cares and lying vanities,
Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly muse,
And washed and sanctified to poesy. [hand
Yes—thou wert plunged, but with forgetful
Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior son;
And with those recreant unbaptized heels
Thou 'rt flying from thy bounden ministries—
So sore it seems and burthensome a task [dead?
To weave unwithering flowers. Is thy Burns
Thy Burns, and nature's own beloved bard,
Who to the "Illustrious* of his native land
So properly did look for patronage."
Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!
They snatched him from the sickle and the
To gauge ale firkins. [plough
Oh! for shame return!
On a bleak rock, mid-way the Aonian mount,
There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
Whose aged branches to the midnight blast
Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough
Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be enhaled,
And, weeping, wreathe it round thy poet's tomb.
Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
Pick the rank henbane, and the dusky flowers
Of night-shade, or its red and tempting fruit;
These, with stopped nostril and glove-guarded
Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine [hand
The illustrious brow of Scotch nobility!

1796

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF BURNS'S BIRTH-DAY.

BY

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

What bird in beauty, flight, or song,
Can with the bard compare,
Who sang as sweet and soar'd as strong
As ever child of air?

His plume, his note, his form could Burns,
For whim or pleasure, change;
He was not one, but all by turns,
With transmigration strange:—

* This is taken verbatim from Burns' dedication of his poems to the nobility and gentry of the Caledonian Hunt.

The blackbird, oracle of spring,
When flow'd his moral lay;
The swallow, wheeling on the wing,
Capriciously at play:—

The humming-bird, from bloom to bloom
Inhaling heavenly balm;
The raven in the tempest's gloom;
The halcyon in the calm:—

In "auld Kirk Alloway," the owl,
At witching time of night;
By "bonnie Doon," the earliest fowl
That carolled to the light.

He was the wren amidst the grove,
When in his homely vein;
At Bannock-burn, the bird of Jove,
With thunder in his train:—

The woodlark, in his mournful hours;
The goldfinch, in his mirth;
The thrush, a spendthrift of his powers,
Enrapturing heaven and earth:—

The swan, in majesty and grace,
Contemplative and still;
But roused,—no falcon in the chase
Could, like his satire, kill:—

The linnet in simplicity;
In tenderness, the dove;
—But, more than all beside, was he
The nightingale, in love.

Oh! had he never stoop'd to shame,
Nor lent a charm to vice,
How had devotion loved to name
That bird of Paradise!

Peace to the dead!—In Scotia's choir
Of minstrels, great and small,
He sprang from his spontaneous fire,
The Phœnix of them all!

ROBIN'S AWA!

AIR—'There will never be peace till Jamie comes hame.'

BY

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

AE night i' the gloaming, as late I pass'd by,
A lassie sang sweet as she milkit her kye, [fa'—
An' this was her sang, while the tears down did
O there's nae bard o' nature sin' Robin's awa!
The bards o' our country, now sing as they may,
The best o' their ditties but maks my heart wae;
For at the blithe strain there was ane beat them a'—
O there's nae bard o' nature sin' Robin's awa!

Auld Wat he is wily and pleases us fine,
Wi' his lang-nebbit tales an' his ferlies lang-syne;
Young Jack is a dreamer, Will sings like a craw,
An' Davie an' Delta, are dowy an' slaw;
Trig Tam frae the Heelands was ance a braw man;
Poor Jamie he blunders an' sings as he can;
There's the Clerk an' the Sodger, the Newsman an' a',
They but gar me greet sairer for him that's awa!

'Twas he that could charm wi' the wauff o' his tongue,
Could rouse up the auld an' enliven the young,
An cheer the blithe hearts in the cot an' the ha,
O there's nae bard o' nature sin' Robin's awa!
Nae sangster amang us has half o' his art,
There was nae fonder lover, an' nae kinder heart;
Then wae to the wight wha wad wince at a flaw,
To tarnish the honours of him that's awa!

If he had some fauts I cou'd never them see,
They're nae to be sung by sic gilpies as me,
He likit us weel, an we likit him a',—
O there's nae sickan callan sin' Robin's awa!
Whene'er I sing late at the milkin my kye,
I look up to heaven an' say with a sigh, [a',—
Although he's now gane, he was king o' them
Ah! there's nae bard o' nature sin' Robin's awa!

ON BURNS'S ANNIVERSARY.

BY

HUGH AINSLIE.

We meet not here to honour one
To gear or grandeur born,
Nor one whose bloodiness of soul
Hath crowns and kingdoms torn.

No, tho' he'd honours higher far
Than lordly things have known,
His titles spring not from a prince,
His honour from a throne.

Nor needs the bard of Coila arts
His honour to prolong;
No flattery to gild his fame;
No record but his song.

O! while old Scotia hath sons
Can feel his social mirth,
So long shall worth and honesty
Have brothers upon earth.

So long as lovers, with his song,
Can spurn at shining dust,
So long hath faithful woman's breast
A bosom she may trust.

And while his independent strain
Can make one spirit glow,
So long shall freedom have a friend,
And tyranny a foe!

Here's to the social, honest man,
Auld Scotland's boast and pride!
And here's to Freedom's worshippers
Of every tongue and tribe.

And here's to them, this night, that meet
Out o'er the social bowl,
To raise to Coila's darling son
A monument of soul.

What heart hath ever matched his flame?
What spirit matched his fire?
Peace to the prince of Scottish song,
Lord of the bosom's lyre!

VERSES
TO THE MEMORY OF BURNS.

BY

FITZGREEN HALLECK, OF NEW YORK.

ON VIEWING THE REMAINS OF A ROSE BROUGHT FROM ALLOWAY KIRK, IN AUTUMN 1822.

WILD rose of Alloway—my thanks!
Thou mind'st me of that autumn noon
When first we met upon "the banks
And braes of bonnie Doon."

Like thine, beneath the thorn-tree's bough,
My sunny hour was glad and brief;
We've cross'd the winter sea, and thou
Art wither'd, flower and leaf!

And will not thy death doom be mine,
The doom of all things wrought of clay,
And wither'd my life's leaf like thine,
Wild rose of Alloway?

Not so HIS memory, for whose sake
My bosom bore thee far and long;
His—who a humbler flower could make
Immortal as his song;—

The memory of Burns—a name
That calls, when brimmed her festal cup,
A nation's glory and her shame,
In silent sadness up.

A nation's glory—be the rest
Forgot—she's canonized his mind;
And it is joy to speak the best
We may of human kind.

I've stood beside the cottage-bed
Where the bard-peasant first drew breath,
A straw-thatch'd roof above his head,
A straw-wrought couch beneath.

And I have stood beside the pile,
His monument—that tells to heaven
The homage of earth's proudest isle
To that bard-peasant given.

There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls, and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with poesy's
Purer and holier fires.

Yet read the names that know not death—
Few nobler ones than Burns are there,
And few have won a greener wreath
Than that which binds his hair.

His is that language of the heart
In which the answering heart would speak,
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light the cheek.

And his, that music to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.

What sweet tears dim the eyes unshed,
What wild vows falter on the tongue,
When "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"
Or "Auld Lang Syne," is sung!

Pure hopes that lift the soul above,
Come with the cotter's hymn of praise,
And dreams of youth, and truth, and love,
With "Logan's" banks and braes.

And when he breathes his master-lay
Of Alloway's witch-haunted wall,
All passions in our frames of clay
Come thronging at his call.

Imagination's world of air,
And our own world, its gloom and glee,
Wit, pathos, poetry are there,
And death's sublimity.

Praise to the bard! his words are driven,
Like flower-seeds by the far winds sown,
Where'er beneath the sky of heaven
The birds of fame have flown.

Praise to the man! a nation stood
Beside his coffin with wet eyes,
Her brave, her beautiful, her good,
As when a loved one dies.

And still, as on his funeral day,
Men stand his cold-earth couch around,
With the mute homage that we pay
To consecrated ground.

And consecrated ground it is,
The last, the hallowed home of one
Who lives upon all memories,
Though with the buried gone.

Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines,
Shrines to no code or creed confined—
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.

Sages with wisdom's garland wreathed,
Crown'd kings and mitred priests of power,
And warriors with their bright swords sheathed,
The mightiest of the hour;

And lowlier names, whose humble home
Is lit by fortune's dimmer star,
Are there—o'er wave and mountain come,
From countries near and far;

Pilgrims whose wandering feet have pressed
The Switzer's snow, the Arab's sand,
Or trod the piled leaves of the West,
My own green forest land.

All ask the cottage of his birth,
Gaze on the scenes he loved and sung,
And gather feelings not of earth
His fields and streams among.

They linger by the Doon's low trees,
And pastoral Nith, and wooded Ayr,
And round thy sepulchres, Dumfries,
The poet's tomb is there!

But what to them the sculptor's art,
His funeral columns, wreaths, and urns,
Were there not graven on the heart
The name of Robert Burns?

ON BURNS.

BY ANDREW MERCER.

The lark that builds the lowest nest
Soars on the highest wing;
She mounts aloft with dewy breast,
And hails the opening spring.

In ambient heaven her course is bright,
Wild carolling on high;
Remote, beyond the reach of sight;
Her voice is melody.

Burns! like the lark, thy home was low,
Like her thy song was sweet;
The daisy on the mountain's brow
Was not more "neighbour meet."

In rustic numbers warbling wild,
Thine were the sweetest strains
That ever in the lowly field
Delighted Scottish swains.

They will delight from age to age,
And wide thy glory spread;
As the wise sayings of the sage
Seem wiser when he's dead.

Tho' here thy course was but a span,
And early sunk in gloom,
Thine immortality began,
And dated from the tomb.

Like as the bird that fable sings
From ashes grows anew,
And soars on still more vigorous wings,
And far more glorious hue.

So, Burns, until the end of time,
Thy fame shall still abound!
In voice unborn, in untried clime,
Thy song shall yet resound.

LINES

FOR THE DUMFRIES ANNIVERSARY, COMMEMORATIVE OF

ROBERT BURNS.

BY

MRS. G. G. RICHARDSON, OF LANGHOLME.

Where Scotia's minstrel pour'd along
His noontide waves of gushing song,
Vigorous and free, as fringed sweep
Of ocean billows o'er the deep;—
Where flowed his last, his requiem strains,
And where his honoured dust remains,
Pilgrims from many lands have come
To view and moralize—his tomb;
They gaze on that pale marble show
Of ardent life with awe and woe,—
That seems to stand in mockery there.
A sentinel o'er a plundered shrine!
A dial severed from the sun!
Till the soul's deeper homage done,
Breaks forth the tributary line.
As echo answers to the air,
Cold, cold and rocky though she be;
His chiselled rest hath often rung
With notes by deepest feelings strung!
And not the less the spell prevailed,
That sculpture's triumph here hath failed.
As well a marble sun might warm,
As mortal art pourtray the fire,
The glow, the intellectual charm,
That halo'd round that *living lyre*.
The soul-less form, the frigid stone,
Say eloquently—He is gone!—
But blame not sculpture's bounded power,
That reaches but life's scentless flower!
And oh! for memories need we turn
To the cold artificial urn;
While yet remain the sun, the sky,
The stream that waked his minstrelsy?
The daisy, or the hare-bell blue,
Each simplest flower that sips the dew:
Beneath his touch a wreath would bow,
Worthy to bind Apollo's brow.
He struck a war-note—Valour heard,
And made his song her gath'ring word!
And Love, the tyrant of his own,
In other's breasts a purer tone,
A holier, tenderer breath respires,
For listening to his Doric wires.
Go to his "Cotter's Hearth," and read
The beauty of his nation's creed!
See piety, in simplest vest
(To eye, and ear, and soul addrest,)
Plead for the inspir'd artist, who
Her reverend form so chastely drew;
No altar-piece in bigot lands,
A deeper, holier thrill commands!

Oh! give his errors to the dust,
And be to perilous genius just.
That "ark which bravely through the waves,
Of deluge-time earth's spices saves!"
Into what distant lands have gone
The hearts his song e'er breath'd upon,
Nor carried with them warmer love
Of kindred, country, and of home?
By Mississippi's, Ganges' stream,
In fancy Scotia's sons will roam
Nith's, Devon's banks, nor idly dream!
The moon that lights on foreign plain
Her exil'd soldier, on the main
Her wand'ring sailor hears his lays,
That bring sweet thoughts of early days;
(As dews to drooping leaves arrive
Their fading freshness to revive;)
Oft caroll'd in that social hour,
And patriot passion owns their power.
For gifted was our master-hand
To tune the hearts of every land;
His voice could sweeter utterance give
To nature's universal tone;
To latest time his name shall live,
For nature's harp was all his own.
Flow verse for ever o'er his tomb!
No other song with his may vie;
But he who mark'd the daisy's bloom,
Though plum'd to range the empyrean high,
And lov'd the linnet's lowly lay,—
Ne'er scorned the faintliest—shed perfume
That nature's worshippers would pay,
If but the incense flow'd sincere,
And oh, such worshippers are here!

TO THE

MEMORY OF ROBERT BURNS.

BY EDWARD RUSHTON.

Poor, wildly sweet uncultur'd flow'r,
Thou lowliest of the Muse's bow'r,
"Stern ruin's ploughshare, 'mang the stowre,
Has crush'd thy stem,"
And sorrowing verse shall mark the hour,
"Thou bonnie gem."

'Neath the green turf, dear Nature's child,
Sublime, pathetic, artless, wild,
Of all thy quips and cranks despoil'd,
Cold dost thou lie!
And many a youth and maiden mild
Shall o'er thee sigh!

Those pow'rs that, eagle wing'd, could soar,
That heart which ne'er was cold before,
That tongue which caus'd the table roar,
Are now laid low,
And Scotia's sons shall hear no more
Thy rapt'rous flow.

Warm'd with "a spark o' nature's fire,"
From the rough plough thou did'st aspire
To make a sordid world admire:
And few like thee,
Oh! Burns, have swept the minstrel's lyre
With ecstasy.

Ere winter's icy vapours fail,
The violet, in the uncultur'd dale,
So sweetly scents the passing gale
That shepherd boys,
Led by the fragrance they inhale,
Soon find their prize.

So when to life's chill glens confin'd,
Thy rich, tho' rough untutor'd mind
Pour'd on the sense of each rude hind
Such sonsy lays
That to thy brow was soon assign'd
The wreath of praise.

Anon, with nobler daring blest,
The wild notes throbbing in thy breast,
Of friends, wealth, learning unpossess'd,
Thy fervid mind
Tow'rds fame's proud turrets boldly press'd,
And pleas'd mankind.

But what avail'd thy powers to please,
When want approach'd and pale disease;
Could these thy infant brood appease
That wail'd for bread?
Or could they, for a moment, ease
Thy wo-worn head?

Applause, poor child of minstrelsy,
Was all the world e'er gave to thee;
Unmov'd, by pinching penury
They saw thee torn,
And now, kind souls! with sympathy,
Thy loss they mourn.

Oh! how I loathe the bloated train,
Who oft hath heard thy dulcet strain;
Yet, when thy frame was rack'd with pain,
Could keep aloof,
And eye with opulent disdain
Thy lowly roof.

Yes, proud Dumfries, oh! would to Heaven
Thou had'st from that cold spot been driven,
Thou might'st have found some shelt'ring haven
On this side Tweed:
Yet, ah! e'en here, poor bards have striven,
And died in need.

True genius scorns to flatter knaves,
Or crouch amidst a race of slaves;
His soul, while fierce the tempest raves,
No tremor knows,
And with unshaken nerve he braves
Life's pelting woes.

No wonder, then, that thou shouldst find
Th' averted glance of half mankind:
Should'st see the sly, slow, supple mind
To wealth aspire,
While scorn, neglect, and want combin'd
To quench thy fire.

While wintry winds pipe loud and strong,
The high-perch'd storm-cock pours his song;
So thy Eolian lyre was strung
'Midst chilling times;
Yet clearly didst thou roll along
Thy "routh of rhymes."

And oh! that routh of rhymes shall raise
For thee a lasting pile of praise.
Haply some wing, in these our days,
Has loftier soar'd:
But from the heart more melting lays
Were never pour'd.

Where Ganges rolls his yellow tide,
Where blest Columbus' waters glide!
Old Scotia's sons, spread far and wide,
Shall oft rehearse,
With sorrow some, but all with pride,
Thy 'witching verse.

In early spring, thy earthly bed
Shall be with many a wild flow'r spread;
The violet there her sweets shall shed,
In humble guise,
And there the mountain-daisy's head
Shall duly rise.

While darkness reigns, should bigotry,
With boiling blood, and bended knee,
Scatter the weeds of infamy
O'er thy cold clay,
Those weeds, at light's first blush, shall be
Soon swept away.

And when thy scorners are no more,
The lonely glens, and sea-beat shore,
Where thou hast croon'd thy fancies o'er
With soul elate,
Oft shall the bard at eve explore,
And mourn thy fate.

SONNET TO THE SHADE OF BURNS.

BY

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

MUTE is thy wild harp now, O bard sublime!
Who, amid Scotia's mountain solitude,
Great nature taught to build the lofty rhyme,
And even beneath the daily pressure rude
Of labouring poverty, thy generous blood
Fired with the love of freedom. Not subdued
Wert thou by thy low fortune; but a time,
Like this we live in, when the abject clime
Of echoing parasite is best approved,
Was not for thee. Indignantly is fled
Thy noble spirit; and, no longer mov'd
By all the ills o'er which thine heart has bled,
Associate worthy of the illustrious dead,
Enjoys with them the liberty it loved.

VERSES

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF CURRIE'S LIFE OF BURNS.

BY

T. H.— DUNFERMLINE.

I CAME, the minstrel on the hills was singing,
The happiest swain in mountain Caledon;
For in him was a joy—fount ever springing
Which none could poison, save himself; and none
Could quench, save death! As yet without alloy
It welled in rapture in the Minstrel Boy.

I came again—Ah! he was quickly changing!
No more would he upon the manna live
Of his own heaven—but through the desert ranging
For raptures which his soul alone could give,
He lost the jewel of eternal joy:—
He was no more the happy Minstrel Boy.

I came again.—His heart, so free, so warm,
Was breaking in the thrall of woe intense;
And his Æolian soul, which once could charm
The tempest that swept o'er it into strains
Of wildest joy, was now itself unstrung,
And to the blast its chords in madness flung.

I came again—The morning beams were sleeping
Upon a grave—The gifted and the young
Lay there—the scented mountain flowers were weeping
Their tears of dew upon its sward, and sung
The lark a requiem o'er the silent bed
Of him—the free—the mighty soul'd—the dead!

Oh! had the tithe of monumental offering,
Which wealth and rank have on his memory rolled,
Been poured upon the living, and the suffering,
E'er yet the twelfth hour of his fate had tolled,
How changed had been his tale, so bright, so brief!
He had not filled his grave,—nor I this leaf.

FOR THE

ANNIVERSARY OF BURNS.

BY

DAVID VEDDER, DUNDEE.

WHEN Januar winds were ravin' wil',
O'er a' the districts o' our isle;
There was a callant born in Kyle,
An' he was christened Robin.
Oh Robin was a dainty lad,
Rantin' Robin, rhymin' Robin;
It made the gossips unco glad,
To hear the cheep o' Robin.

That ne'er to be forgotten morn,
When Coila's darling son was born;
Auld Scotland on her stock an' horn,
Play'd "welcome hame" to Robin.
And Robin was the blythest loon,
Rantin' Robin, rhymin' Robin,
That ever sang beneath the moon—
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

The Muses round his cradle hung,
The Graces wat his infant tongue,
And independence, wi' a rung,
Cried, "Red the gate for Robin."
For Robin's soul-arousing tones,
Rantin' Robin, rhymin' Robin,
Gart tyrants tremble on their thrones—
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

Then let's devote this night to mirth,
And celebrate our poet's birth,
While Freedom preaches in the earth,
She'll tak her text frae Robin.
Oh Robin's magic notes shall ring,
Rantin' Robin, rhymin' Robin;
While rivers run, and flowrets spring,
Huzza! huzza! for Robin.

THE

POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS.

Preface to the First, or Kilmarnock, Edition.

(JULY 1786.)

THE following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idleness of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these, and other celebrated names, their countrymen are, at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, awakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing: and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigue of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings—the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears—in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make shift to jingle a few doggerel Scottish rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet, of no small consequence, forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that "*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing, in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scottish poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

DEDICATION

TO THE

SECOND, OR EDINBURGH, EDITION.

OF

THE POEMS OF BURNS.

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN

OF

THE CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen:

A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land; those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough; and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue: I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours: that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this Address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favours: I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious Countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country, that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party: and may social Joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native seats; and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the ruler, and licentiousness in the people, equally find you an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,
With the sincerest gratitude and highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted humble Servant,
ROBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh,
April 4, 1787.

POEMS.

In Burns's own Memoranda, written in April 1784, he says:—"As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, peculiar to myself, or some here and there such out-of-the way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of Winter, more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the

"Mighty tempest, and the heavy waste,
Abrupt, and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth!"

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity favourable to everything great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me—something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:"—

Winter.

A DIRGE.

I.

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

II.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"*
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

III.

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme,
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (O, do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

* Dr. Young. R. B.

[The above is, with the exception of one or two songs, the earliest of all the Poet's compositions. According to Gilbert Burns, it was a juvenile production. It is, says Lockhart, "an admirably versified piece."]

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF Poor Mailie,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc* he cam doytin by.
Wi' glowrin' e'en an' lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it!
He gaped wide, but naething spak—
At length poor Mailie silence brak.

"O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my master dear.

* A neibor-herd—callan. R. B.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!

"Tell him he was a master kin'
An' ay was guid to me and mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

"O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel;
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay, an' rips o'corn.

"An' may they never learn the gaets
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' pets!
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the sheers:
So wives will gi'e them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame:
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

"An' niest my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop,
But ay keep mind to moop an' mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel'!

"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin' wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

"Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blather."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
And clos'd her een amang the dead.

[" The circumstances of the poor sheep," says Gilbert Burns, "were pretty much as Robert has described them. He had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with Hughoc's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her 'Death and Dying Words,' pretty much in the way they now stand."

"The expiring animal's admonitions touching the education of the 'poor toop lamb, her son and heir, and the 'yowie silly thing' her daughter, are from the same peculiar vein of sly homely wit, embedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the 'Twa Dogs,' and perhaps to its utmost depth in his '*Death and Doctor Hornbook.*' It need scarcely be added that poor Mailie was a real personage, though she did not actually die until some time after her *last words* were written."—LOCKHART.]

Poor Mailie's Elegy.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neibor dear
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonnier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie dead.*

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing—a rape!
It maks guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi' chokin' dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye bards on bonnie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O Robin s reed!
His heart will never get aboon
His Mailie dead!

["The principle of love, which is the great characteristic of Burns, often manifests itself in a thinner disguise, in the shape of humour. Every where, in his sunny mood, a full buoyant flood of mirth runs through his mind,—he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all nature. He has a bold and irresistible faculty of caricature; this is drollery rather than humour. A much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him than this, and comes forth here and there in evanescent and beautiful touches, as in his 'Address to the Mouse,' or 'The Farmer's Auld Mare,' or in '*Poor Mailie*,' which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there is a humour as fine as that of Sterne, and yet altogether different, original, peculiar,—in one word, the humour of Burns."—CARLISLE.]

'The Elegy' is a somewhat later production than the 'Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie.'

Epistle to Davie.

A BROTHER POET.†

[DAVID SILLAR, SCHOOLMASTER AND BARD.]

January, 1784.

I.

WHILE winds frae off Ben Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great folks' gift,
That live sae bien an' snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker and canker
To see their cursed pride.

II.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't;
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang 's we're hale and fier:
"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"‡
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.§

---

* This stanza, says Gilbert Burns, was, at first, as follows—

She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo' like goats, an' legs like trams;
She was the flower o' Fairlee lambs,
A famous breed:
Now Robin, greetin', chows the hams
O' Mailie dead.

The taste of Burns evidently rejected the verse, because the concluding lines did not harmonize with the prevailing sentiment of the poem. "It were a pity," adds Gilbert, "that the 'Fairlee Lambs' should lose the honour once intended them."

† [The hero of this Epistle is the well-known David Sillar, a scholar and a poet. He was a native of Tarbolton, became, in 1784, a schoolmaster at Irvine, and having, in the course of a long life, realized considerable property, he was appointed one of the magistrates of that town. He published a volume of poems, in the Scottish dialect, some of which displayed considerable talent. He was an early friend of Burns, by whom he was introduced into the Tarbolton Bachelor's Club, in May 1781. David Sillar died on the 2nd of May 1830, at the age of seventy.]

‡ Ramsay.

§ ["The old remembered beggar, even in my own time, like the baccoch, or travelling cripple of Ireland, was expected to merit his quarters by something beyond an exposition of his distresses. He was often a talkative, facetious fellow, prompt at repartee, and not withheld from exercising his power that way by any respect of persons, his patched cloak giving him the privilege of the ancient jester. To be a *guid crack*, that is, to possess talents for conversation, was essential to the trade of a 'puir body' of the more esteemed class; and Burns, who delighted in the amusement their discourses afforded, seems to have looked forward with gloomy firmness to the possibility of himself becoming, one day or other, a member of their itinerant society. In his poetical works, it is alluded to so often as, perhaps, to indicate that he considered the consummation as not utterly impossible. Thus, in the fine dedication of his works to Gavin Hamilton, he says,

'And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg.'

Again, in his Epistle to Davie, a brother poet, he states that, in their closing career,

'The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.'

And after having remarked that

'To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress;'

the bard reckons up, with true poetical spirit, that free enjoyment of the beauties of nature, which might counterbalance the hardship and uncertainty of the life even of a mendicant. In one of his prose letters, that to Mr. Murdoch, dated Jan. 15th, 1783, he details this idea yet more seriously, and dwells upon it as not ill adapted to his habits and powers. As the life of a Scottish mendicant of the eighteenth century seems to have been contemplated without much horror by Robert

III.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

IV.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune:
Syne rhyme till 't, we'll time till 't,
And sing 't when we hae done.

V.

It's no in titles nor in rank:
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest:
It's no in makin' muckle mair;
It's no in books; it's no in lear;
To make us truly blest;
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang:
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrang.

VI.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless, and fearless
Of either heav'n or hell!
Esteeming and deeming,
It a' an idle tale!

VII.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An' s thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel';
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Tho' losses, and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest,)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy:
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye hae your Meg,* your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

IX.

O, all ye pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou, whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

Burns, the author could hardly have erred in giving to Edie Ochiltree something of poetical character and personal dignity, above the more abject of his miserable calling. The class had, in fact, some privileges. A lodging, such as it was, was readily granted to them in some of the out-houses; and the awmous (alms) of a handful of meal (called a gowpen) was scarce denied by the poorest cottager. The mendicant disposed these, according to their different quality, in various bags around his person, and thus carried about with him the principal part of his sustenance, which he literally received for the asking. At the houses of the gentry his cheer was mended by scraps of broken meat, and perhaps a Scottish 'twalpenny,' or English penny, which was expended in snuff or whiskey. In fact, these indolent peripatetics suffered much less real hardship and want of food than the poor peasant from whom they received alms."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

* Sillar's flame was a lass of the name of Margaret Orr, who had charge of the children of Mrs. Stewart of Stair. It was not the fortune of "Meg" to become Mrs. Sillar.

x.

All hail! ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

xi.

O, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin, rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
'Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
An' rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

["Among the earliest of his poems," says Gilbert Burns, "was the Epistle to Davie. Robert often composed without any regular plan. When anything made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to any poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in the summer of 1784, when, in the interval of harder labour, Robert and I were weeding in the garden, that he repeated to me the principal part of this Epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the Epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scottish poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here, there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet: that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging.—Robert seemed well pleased with my criticism."

The peculiar stanza in which this poem is written was probably introduced to Burns's notice by Allan Ramsay; but it was employed by Scottish poets of much earlier date, particularly by Captain Alexander Montgomery, in his "Cherry and the Slae," written in the reign of James VI.]

Burns's First Epistle to David Sillar produced the following reply from Dainty Davie:—

Epistle to Robert Burns.

i.

While Reekie's Bards your muse commen',
An' praise the numbers o' your pen,
Accept this kin'ly frae a frien',
Your Dainty Davie;
Wha ace o' hearts does still remain,
Ye may believe me.

ii.

I ne'er was muckle gi'en to praisin',
Or else ye might be sure o' fraisin';
For trouth, I think, in solid reason,
Your kintra reed
Plays sweet as Robin Fergusson,
Or his on Tweed.

iii.

Your Luath, Cæsar bites right sair;
An' when ye paint the Holy Fair,
Ye draw it to a very hair;
Or when ye turn,
An' sing the follies o' the Fair,
How sweet ye mourn!

iv.

Let Coila's plains wi' me rejoice,
An' praise the worthy Bard whose lays
Their worth and beauty high doth raise
To lasting fame;
His works, his worth, will ever praise
An' crown his name.

v.

Brave Ramsay now, and Fergusson,
Wha hae sae lang time fill'd the Throne
O' Poetry, may now lie down
Quiet i' their urns,
Since Fame, in justice, gies the crown
To Coila's Burns.

vi.

Hail! happy Bard! ye're now confest,
The King o' Singers i' the west;
Edina hath the same exprest:
Wi' joy they fin'
That ye're, when tried by Nature's test,
Guid sterling coin.

vii.

Sing on, my frien'; your fame's secur'd,
An' still maintain the name o' Bard;
But yet tak tent an' keep a guard:
For Envy's tryin'
To blast your fame; mair just reward
For the envyin'.

VIII.

But tho' the tout o' fame may please you,
Let na the flatt'rin' ghaist o'erheeze you:
Ne'er flyte nor fraise to gar folk roose you;
For men o' skill,
When ye write weel, will always praise you
Out o' guid will.

IX.

Great numbers on this earthly ba'
As soon as death gies them the ca',
Permitted are to slide awa',
An' straught forgot,—
Forbid that this should ever fa'
To be your lot!

X.

I ever had an anxious wish,
Forgive me, Heav'n! if 'twas amiss,
That fame in life my name would bless,
An' kindly save
It from the cruel tyrant's crush
Beyond the grave.

XI.

Tho' the fastest liver soonest dies,
An' length o' days sud mak ane wise;
Yet haste wi' speed, to glory rise
An' spur your horse;
They're shortest ay wha gain the prize
Upo' the course.

XII.

Sae to conclude, auld frien' an' neibor,
Your muse forget na weel to feed her,
Then steer thro' life wi' birr an' vigour,
To win a horn,
Wha's soun' shall reach ayont the Tiber
Mang ears unborn.

Second Epistle to Davie,

A BROTHER POET.*

AULD NEIBOR,

I'M three times, doubly, o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant frien'ly letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair,
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter
Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld, grey hairs.

But DAVIE, lad, I'm rede ye're glaikit;
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket
Until ye fyke;
Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faiket,
Be hain't wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
Rivin' the words to gar them clink;
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or masons;
An' whyles, but aye owre late, I think
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the Bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin' clink,
The devil-haet, that I sud ban
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin',
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
An' while ought's there,
Then, hiltie, skiltie, we gae scrievin',
An' fash nae mair.

Leeze me on rhyme! its aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist, my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure,
She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you mony a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae puir,
Na, even though limpin' wi' the spavie
Frae door to door.

"David Sillar was, for some time, the chosen companion of Burns, and seems to have confided much to him in matters of love-making. The bard of Mossgiel accompanied his friend on one of his visits to the family of Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, and, as some of the lassies sung well, he gave them one or two of his songs. Mrs. Stewart, happened, by chance, to see one of these compositions, and was so much struck with its grace and tenderness that she desired to be told when the Author visited Stair again. It was in this way that his acquaintance with that accomplished lady began: and many years afterwards the Poet told Miss Stewart that, when requested to walk into the drawing-room, to be introduced to her mother, he suffered more than he would like to suffer again.—"Indeed," he said, "I endured such palpitation of heart as I never after experienced among

'Lords and ladies of high degree.'"

As this introduction took place in 1784, Mrs. Stewart must be, hereafter, regarded as one of the first in Ayr-shire, above the Poet's rank in life, who perceived his genius and treated him with respect."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

* This Epistle is prefixed to the Poems of David Sillar, which were published in Kilmarnock, in the year 1789.

Address to the Deil.*

"O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war!"—
MILTON.

I.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim and sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges† about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

II.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

III.

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;
Far kenn'd and noted is thy name:
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far:
An', faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

IV.

Whyles, ranging like a roaring lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin;'
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin'
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

* This poem has been ably illustrated by Mr. Thomas Landseer, accompanied with explanatory notes, many of them excellent, and displaying much critical acumen. We subjoin some of these:—

STANZAS III. IV.—"This stanza and the following are not the only ones of the poem in which Burns has contrived to blend severe moral truths with glimpses of local scenery, and snatches of careless merriment. May we intreat the Southern reader, who has hitherto been deterred from perusing the poetry of Burns, by his provincialisms, to consider the powerful strain of true poetry which pervades this fourth stanza?"

STANZA V.—"This stanza is picturesque and full of interest. The variety of the detail is in good keeping with that garrulous minuteness which is the universal privilege of grandmothers. Would that all reverend 'grannies' were, moreover, as poetical in their relations as this lady. It is at this part of the Address that we begin to recognise the master hand with which Burns has touched the scenery of the Highlands, the moors, the lochs, and mountains. The wild and lonely places, the unearthly noises, the bewildering mists, the yet more deceptive 'wild fires dancing o'er the heath;' all of these are etchings, light, indeed, but touched with the fidelity of a keen and minute observer of nature."

STANZAS VI. VII. VIII.—"In these stanzas, he has touched, with a nice and accurate pencil, one of those foibles common to our moral nature, which require the most delicate handling. He intimates, with mingled archness and simplicity, that the good old woman never suspected that the noises which she heard MIGHT be that hum of insects which she *thought* it so much resembled, above the waters of the loch, —or the motion of a frightened bird whirring through the elder bushes. This propensity to attribute natural effects to supernatural causes is one of the best known and least intelligible phænomena of the human mind. We are always rejecting the evidence of our senses, to tamper with the imaginary evidence supplied by analogous reasoning upon mere abstract principles. The good wife never dreamed of referring her alarms to the natural objects around her. A humming drone, at twilight, by the waters, a rustling in the leaves of the trees about her cottage—if these did not bespeak the presence of the Devil, what the d—l else could they indicate?

"Thus our poet proceeds to tell us that, beyond the same loch, he himself had a visible encounter with something, LIKE, indeed, to a *bush of rushes*, waving and shaking in the wind; and, after an admirable description of the emotions of fear by which he was oppressed, he incidentally mentions that the Great Unknown did, certainly, with an abrupt and hasty flight take away like a drake; but even the appropriate note of the fluttering fowl never once awakened his suspicion that it might be a fowl proper, and not the foul fiend!"

STANZA XII.—"The disruption occasioned by a thaw, and the noise of the fragments of ice sliding over one another, are happily described here. No opportunity seems more fitting for the intervention of the mischievous Kelpies, whom our northern superstitions imagine to be delighted with the last agonies of drowning men and despairing mariners, than the uproar of waters and icy masses, the tides, and the winds, all in angry collision, and the raging of the elements outroaring the delirious cries of human terror. It is not twenty years since the piercing shrieks and supplications for help, of a passage boat's company, which had been landed on a sandbank, at low water, in the Solway Firth, instead of on the Cumberland coast, and who found, as the moon rose and the haze dispersed, that they were in mid-channel, with a strong tide setting fast in upon them, were mistaken by the people, both on the Scotch and English shores, for the wailings of Kelpies! The consequence was that the unhappy people (whose boat had drifted from them before their fatal error was discovered) were all drowned; though nothing had been easier, but for the rooted superstition of their neighbours ashore, than to have effectually succoured them."

STANZAS XV. XVI.—"In these stanzas, the transition is so startling, and yet so beautiful, that we are reminded of those early Italian poets who delighted themselves and their readers by abrupt and striking alternations from the burlesque to the pathetic; from the heroic to the humorous; and the Ayr-shire bard has the decided advantage of accomplishing the same end with less apparent effort and premeditation than his gifted predecessors. Is it possible to condense within the compass of four or five lines a more charming sketch of an infant world, a newly created race of beings, a state of existence serene, blissful, and contented; a condition of society unalloyed by vice or misery, want or pain? And with how much effect does the delicious repose of this picture prepare us for the fatal reverse which follows, by the introduction of the fell destroyer who, 'maist ruin'd a'.'—Where the subject is felt so deeply, it is almost difficult to deprecate the tone, somewhat too light, in which the poet has chosen to treat it."

STANZA XIX.—"If the Catalogue of all the devil's doings could have been continued with equal fidelity and spirit, we might have regretted that this Address was not prolonged. But Burns formed a just estimate of the length and difficulty of such an undertaking. The reader ought to turn *optimist*, and acknowledge that 'all is for the best.'"

STANZA XXI.—"There is about this parting admonition a touch of human pity, which was evidently the spontaneous ebullition, perhaps the unconscious one, of a kind and sympathising nature; for precisely such a nature was Burns's. The exhortation to amendment, the suggestion of a happier fate as the result of that amendment, and the commiseration expressed for the arch-enemy of man, present, in this stanza, a moral lesson which would not have disgraced a graver preacher, a holier theme, or a more solemn occasion."

† *Spairges* is the best Scots word in its place I ever met with. An Englishman can have no idea of the ludicrous image it conveys. The deil is not standing flinging the liquid brimstone on his friends with a ladle, but we see him standing at a large boiling vat, with something like a golf-bat, striking the liquid this way and that way aslant, with all his might, making it fly through the whole apartment, while the inmates are winking and holding up their arms to defend their faces. This is precisely the idea conveyed by *spairging*; flinging it in any other way would be *laving* or splashing.—THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

v.

I've heard my reverend Grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

VI.

When twilight did my Grannie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin',
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortries comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

VII.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

VIII.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

IX.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

X.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain:
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie's gaen
As yell's the bill.

XI.

Thence mystic knots* mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

XII.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction;
An 'nighted trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

XIII.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

XIV.

When masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell!

XV.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry sward,
In shady bow'r:†

XVI.

Then you, ye auld, snec-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.,
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
Maist ruin'd a'.

XVII.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,

* [The mind of the Poet was stored with the superstitions contained in the ancient songs and traditions in Scotland. The way in which witch-knots operated on the fair sex is thus described in the ballad of "Willie's ladye" in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border:

"Syne Willy's loosed the nine witch knots
That were amang that ladye's locks;
And Willy's ta'en out the kaims o' care
That were into that ladye's hair;
And he's ta'en down the bush o' woodbine
Hung atween her lover and the witch carline.

And he has kill'd the master kid
That ran beneath that ladye's bed;
And he has loosed her left foot shee (shoe),
And latten that ladye lighter be;
And now he has gotten a bonny son,
And meikle grace be him upon."]

† This verse ran originally thus:—

Lang syne in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin' Adam's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonnie Jean,
My dearest part,
A dancin', sweet, young, handsome quean,
Wi' guileless heart.

Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke?

XVIII.

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
And lows'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked scawl,
Was warst ava?

XIX.

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin' fierce,
Sin' that day Michael* did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.†

XX.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin',
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',
An' cheat you yet.

XXI.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!‡

* *Vide* Milton, Book vi.—R. B.

† [The three verses from the "Poem on Life," addressed by the poet to "Colonel De Peyster," commencing

‡ "Ah, Nick! ah, Nick! it is na fair,"

would have here made a very appropriate addition to this poem.]

[THE "DEIL'S ANSWER"

TO THIS ADDRESS, BY THE POET'S FRIEND

LAPRAIK,

IS AS FOLLOWS:—

TO THE POET BURNS.

Whae'er thou be, thou art na blate,
Wha mocks a sp'rit o' ancient date,
Wha't best is in a confin'd state,
An' canna pass
Beyond the bounds an' limits set
By the first Cause.

You Poets, when you lift your pen,
A' but yoursels to me you sen'!
But, by this time, thee weel I ken',
Thou'rt my acquaintance,
These twenty years I did thee learn
To blether nonsense.

I own man's credit was nae sma',
When he was new, an' tight, an' bra';
His pow'r was great to rule o'er a'
Things that were made;
But soon his pride did let him fa',
For a' that's said.

Although I am a creature made,
No pow'r o'er me old Adam had,
Then why should'st thou wi' names upbraid,
An' so ill use me,
Wha now am chain'd by God's strong hand,
An' can't abuse thee?

Thou ca's me Hornie, Nick, an' Cloutie,
An' tells my cave is grim an' sootie;
But stop, thou'lt, may-be, be my booty;
I'll try my skill;
I'll gang as far as Fate will let me,
An' wi' guid will.

I'll thee entice baith day an' night;
O' me thou need be in nae fright;
As Deil I'll ne'er come in thy sight;
Thoul't still embrace
My motions, which will yield delight,
When done wi' grace.

I know thou hast a wanton turn,
Wi' passions stout as e'er were born;
Thou lik'st the maid wi' hainches roun'
An' waist genteel,
Wi' e'en jet black, an hair nut brown,
Thy heart she'll steal.

Wha walks sae neat, throws out her toes,
An' minches as she past thee goes:
By such thou'rt hookit by the nose
For a' thy skill;
Thou'lt ne'er me blame, I'm sae abstruse
Thou'lt take thy will.

Thou tells, thou ance was fear'd thysel',
Nae wonder; for 'tis guilt mak's hell;
Thy conscience check'd, wi' sic a knell,
Did mak' thee shake,
For naething mair than sugh o' quill
O' duck or drake.

Thou tells, by times I travel far,
An' that I'm neither blate nor scaur—
Mock not! let never guid frien's jar
Wi' ane anither,
Thou'rt my full mark, baith keel an' tar,
If not a brither.

Pray R—b, the rhymer, just nae mair,
An' o' your titles tak' a care;
Or else ye ken how ye shall fare,
For a' your cracks,
An' muckle-thought-o' rhyming ware
An' catching snacks.

An' if your mocks I more shall hear,
I, by my cavern deep, do swear,
Upon you vengeance I will rear;
Thou shalt lament
What thou hast publish'd, far an' near,
Me to affront.

With irony thou spak'st wi' glee,
Which shews thy disrespect to me,
Bids me repent, an' then may-be,
I'll hae a stake;
I thank thee for thy wae-like e'e
For fashion's sake.

For o' my hopes I canna boast;
For sure an' certain I am lost;
The sure decree 'gainst me is past,
An' canna alter!
May-be thou'lt ken't, unto thy cost,
If I thee halter.

Thy chance is little mair than mine;
Thou mock'st at every thing divine;
Thy rhetorick has made thee shine,
To please the wicked;
But ere thou round the corner twine,
I'll hae thee nicked.]

"It was, I think, in the winter of 1784, as we were going with carts for coals to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that Robert first repeated to me the 'Address to the Deil.' The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this august personage."—GILBERT BURNS.

"The Address to the Deil is one of the happiest of the Poet's productions. Humour and tenderness are so happily intermixed that it is impossible to say which preponderates."—CURRIE.

The Prince and Power of the air is a favourite topic of rustic speculation. An old shepherd told me he had, when a boy, as good as seen him.—"I was," said he, "returning from school, and stopped till the twilight, groping trouts in a burn, when a thunder-storm came on. I looked up, and just before me a cloud came down as dark as night—the queerest-shaped cloud I ever saw; and there was something terrible about it, for when it was close to me, I saw, as plain as I see you, a dark form within it, thrice the size of any earthly man. It was the Evil One himself—there's nae doubt o' that."—"Samuel," I said, "did you hear his cloven-foot on the ground?"—"No," replied he, "but I saw ane o' his horns—and O, what waves o' fire were rowing after him!" The Devil frequently makes his appearance in our old mysteries, but he comes to work unmitigated mischief, and we part with him gladly. The "Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie," who lives in the imaginations of the peasantry, is not quite such a reprobate, though his shape is anything but prepossessing. Nor is he an object of much alarm; a knowledge of the scriptures and a belief in heaven are considered sure protectors; and a peasant will brave a suspicious road at midnight if he can repeat a psalm.—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

"Burns even pities the very deil, without knowing, I am sure, that my uncle Toby had been beforehand there with him! 'He is the father of curses and lies,' said Dr. Slop, 'and is cursed and damned already.' 'I am sorry for it,' said my uncle Toby. A Poet without love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility."—CARLISLE.

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS Auld Mare Maggie,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A GUID New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide's as white 's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaizie,
A bonny grey:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere:
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonnie bride:
An' sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle Stewart I could hae bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far, behin'!

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, an' stood abeigh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma' droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
In guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, and fech't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith and pow'r,
'Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I kenn'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and stent', and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a';
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin',
An' thy auld days may end in starvin',
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

"It was the token of a true knight in chivalry to be kind to his charger: the Kyle farmer shares in the same feeling, for he is gentle, both in word and deed, to his 'Auld Mare.' He recollects when she bore him triumphantly home when mellow, from markets and other meetings: how she ploughed the stiffest land and faced the steepest brae, and moreover brought home his bonnie bride—

'An' sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could hae bragged wide,
For sic a pair.'"

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

["Burns must have been an exceedingly good and kind-hearted being; for whenever he has occasion to address or mention any subordinate being, however mean, even a mouse or a flower, then there is a gentle pathos in his language that awakens the finest feelings of the heart."—THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.]

To a Haggis.*

FAIR fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
As lang 's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin', rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch an' strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
'Till all their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guid man, maist like to rive,
Bethankit hums.

* [The haggis is a dish peculiar to Scotland, though supposed to be of French extraction. It is composed of minced offal of mutton, mixed with oat-meal and suet, and boiled in a sheep's stomach. When made in *Elspa's* way, with "a curn o' spice" (see the *Gentle Shepherd*) it is an agreeable, albeit a somewhat heavy, dish, always providing that no horror be felt at the idea of its preparation. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, 1829, makes the following statement:—"About sixteen years ago, there resided at Mauchline a Mr. Robert Morrison, cabinet-maker. He was a great crony of Burns, and it was in Mr. Morrison's house that the poet usually spent the 'mids o' the day' on Sunday. It was in this house that he wrote his celebrated *Address to a Haggis*, after partaking liberally of that dish, as prepared by Mrs. Morrison." The Ettrick Shepherd has, on the contrary, averred that the poem was written in the house of Mr. Andrew Bruce, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, after in like manner partaking of the dish. It was first published in the *Scots Magazine* for January 1787.—ROBERT CHAMBERS.]

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak' her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whissle;
An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
Gie her a Haggis! *

[The joyous nationality of this poem is but part of its merit. The "Haggis" forms one of the most savoury morsels in Scottish cookery. Burns, it is said, once uttered something like this poem in prose, when called on to say grace where a Haggis was on the board, and the applause which he obtained induced him to work it into verse. I heard, when a boy, the Address to the Haggis recited in a boon of reapers: an old highland bandsman listened with great attention; when these lines were repeated,—

"Clap in his wailie nieve a blade
He'll mak it whissle,"

he could no longer contain himself, but cried out, "Its the God's truth! To make a steel blade whistle requires a man! There was Donald Bane, when sixty-six years old, and no sae souple as he had been, was called on to fight for the honour o' the broad sword, with a foreign braggart. 'Donald—said his chief—d'ye think y're yauld enough for him?' with that he whipt out his claymore—a broad bright bit o' steel it was—and made it whistle in the air like a hunting hawk; weel! away he gaed up the Lawn-market to the strife, and ye'll na hinder some ane frae saying 'Ah Donald's failed; I doubt he'll no do!' When Donald heard this, I wish ye had seen but his e'e—it glented fire—he lap right up into the air, and seizing a lamp-iron far aboon other men's reach, hung by ae hand for a moment, sprang proudly down, and cried, 'She'll *do* yet!'"

The component parts of a Haggis are sometimes inquired anxiously into by men who love the pleasures of the table.—"Pray, sir," said a man of the south, "why do you boil it in a sheep's bag; and, above all, what is it made of?"—"Sir," answered a man of the north, "we boil it in a sheep's bag because such was the primitive way: it was invented, sir, before linen was thought of: and as for what it is made of, I dare not trust myself with telling—I can never name all the savoury items without tears; and surely you would not wish me to expose myself in a public company?" A Haggis, in the witty and whimsical "Noctes Ambrosianæ" of Blackwood, bursts when cut up over plate and table, floods the apartment, to the horror of the Ettrick Shepherd, and the astonishment of Christopher North.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

It is recorded by Galt in his "Autobiography," that he sat next to the Duke of York at an anniversary dinner in honour of the Poet, when his Royal Highness was attracted by the savoury steam proceeding from a Scotch Haggis. It was evidently ill made; the bag was dingy,—altogether an ugly, flabby, desultory, trencherful of fat things. "Pray what dish is that?" inquired the Duke. "A boiled pair of bagpipes!" gravely replied Galt, who dearly relished a joke, in his own quiet humourous way. The dish was immediately ordered to be removed.—C.

A Winter Night.†

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness defend you,
From seasons such as these?"

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning through the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scaur.

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* Another version of the last stanza reads thus:—

Ye Powers wha gie us a' that's gude,
Still bless auld Caledonia's brood
Wi' great John Barleycorn's heart's blude,
In stoups or luggies,
And on our board, that king of food,
A glorious Haggis!

[† First printed in the Second, or Edinburgh, Edition, 1787.]

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark mufflʼd, viewʼd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole:—

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting, [bestows.
Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man
See stern oppression's iron grip,
Or mad ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd luxury, flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance unrefin'd,
Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.
Where, where is love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly honour's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted honour turns away,
Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps, this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!
Oh ye! who sunk, in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfied keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel fortune's undeserved blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer—
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Through all his works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

"The beginning of this poem gives a capital description of the rising of a storm. Then again appears the kind feeling heart for suffering humanity."—The Ettrick Shepherd.

"Neither the subjects of his poems, nor his manner of handling them, allow us long to forget their author. On the basis of his human character he has reared a poetic one, which, with more or less distinctness, presents itself to view in almost every part of his earlier, and, in my estimation, his most valuable, verses. This poetic fabric, dug out of the quarry of genuine humanity, is airy and spiritual; and though the materials in some parts are coarse, and the disposition is often fantastic and irregular, yet the whole is agreeable and strikingly attractive."—Wordsworth.

"The voice which the Poet hears, amid the winter storm, utters sentiments in unison with those which the Poet claims as his own in the introduction. He prepares us for sympathising in the sufferings of the human race, by the description of the rivulets choked with snow; the cattle crowding to the shelter of some precipitous bank, and the birds, which cheered him with their songs in summer, sitting chittering among the leafling trees."—Cunningham.

"How touching is it, amid the glooms of personal misery that broods over and around him; yet, amid the storm, he thinks of 'the cattle, the silly sheep, and the wee harmless burdies!' yes, the tenant of the mean lowly hut has the heart to pity all these. This is worth a whole volume of homilies on mercy; for it is the voice of mercy itself. Burns lives in sympathy: his soul rushes forth into all the realms of being: nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him."—Carlisle.

The Jolly Beggars.

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

When lyart leaves bestrew the yird,
Or wavering like the bauckie-bird,*
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;

When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Poosie Nansie's† held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies:
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted and they sang;

* The old Scottish name for the *bat*.

† [Poosie Nansie's, "The scene of the 'Jolly Beggars,' was a public house in Mauchline of the lowest possible description, to which beggars and vagrants resorted for lodging and food. It was adapted for the entertainment of such characters only, and no other sort of persons ever entered it, excepting, perhaps, such wags as Burns himself, when bent upon amusement, and desirous of seeing the lowest scenes which human nature can exhibit.

"As the approach of night calls home all the creatures of animated nature to rest and enjoyment, so, in these good old times, did Saturday night, the sun-set of the week, bring to roost all the stray sons of poverty, bent upon compensating, by the festivity of one night, the contumelies, the wanderings, the hunger, cold, pain, and abstinence, of the rest. On that evening, therefore, whole fleets of mendicants might be seen thronging the roads, bound for Poosie Nansie's, to 'haud the splore,' and pouring in at all the 'town-ends' in Mauchline. Her oval-shaped door received them within its *crater*, as the bung-hole in the genie's cask, in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, received the vapour into which the fisherman had caused him to dissolve himself. Then would there be recognitions of acquaintance, and the most ceremonious shaking of hands imaginable; for they were always ceremonious, till such time as the ice of politeness was thawed by the genial warmth of a few preliminary drams; when, of course, there was a greater community of friendly feeling throughout. But not more wonders in the dissolution of ceremony did Poosie's Kilbagie achieve, than did her large pulpit-looking fire, round which they gathered, in respect of relaxing with equally potent heat the cripple limbs of the company. The miserable wretch who perished with the rheumatism, and walked double through the week, was cured in an instant, as if the demon of the disease had fled from his bones on coming within the influence of a spell. The 'Po-or ou-ld bli-nd man,' who had howled forth the terrible circumstances of his condition, vexing the ears of the lieges, for six long days, suddenly opened his eyes to the blessings before him, as if he had only awoke from a long sleep. The 'poor sailor lad,' too, who had lost an arm with Rodney, on the glorious 12th of August, 1782, seemed suddenly to forget all the effects of the engagement, and, in the twinkling of a handspike, the long deceased limb sprang from the jacket, into all its pristine health and vigour. More astonishing resurrections than even that took place. Limbs accustomed to 'limp wi' the spavie,' recovered their vigour and proportion. Legs grew down from trunks formerly detruncated, and arms sprang from shoulders erst apparently stumps. Immense blotches that, in week days, excited the commiseration of the charitable, in the character of plague spots upon the skin, at once disappeared, 'and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, left not a wreck behind.' The man 'with a brown leg and blue one,' who had 'had the black scurvy in Jamaica, and come home a poor helpless object,' became in a moment the soundest and liveliest man in the company; and the wretch who trembled through the week between two crutches, as if every part of his body were taking leave of the other, now shivering with the ague, and at other times agonized by the cramp, threw by his wooden friends and was 'himself again.' In short, the transformations and cures accomplished at Poosie Nansie's fire-side were miraculous and manifold. Suffice it to say that the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke, (nay, 'ranted and sang,') the lame walked—and *all drank*. In the latter department, there was not a single inefficient member.

"No sooner were the window-shutters of night all fairly closed in, and every thing snug, than the festivities of the evening commenced. Tea was paraded by the females of the company, and drunk from *luggies, caups, and tinnies*, all of them vessels not easily broken. Fowls and pieces of meat were sometimes produced from secret wallets, and bacon ham was no unusual dish; all of which were hastily prepared by frying—for they had no delicacy of taste in cooking. To these were added savoury messes, consisting of cold meat, eggs, hares, and other articles of food the most incongruous in association, seasoned highly with salt, pepper, onions, and occasionally garlic. As soon as the feast was pretty well over—for it never could be said to be altogether done—the fiercer debaucheries began, and the hostess was in perpetual demand for supplies of more liquor. Nansie did not retail spirits herself, but procured what was wanted from a neighbouring shop, where she was allowed a small emolument for her custom, which she contrived to increase not a little by cheating her guests of an enormous commission (in kind) for her trouble. Kilbagie was then sold so low as one penny per gill; of course it was quite possible to get completely intoxicated for four pence. Over this stuff they were wont to carouse till midnight, when the 'mirth and fun' generally grew so 'fast and furious' that nothing could contain them, and their joy could only find vent in the confusion of a dance or a squabble. If the former amicable method chanced to be adopted, the floor was cleared in an instant for action. The whole of Nansie's furniture was promiscuously huddled into a corner, and to it they set, men, women, and children, like a parcel of infuriated Bacchanalians, tossing their limbs wildly about, and using gesticulations, and *setting* into attitudes that no language can paint. After tiring of this exercise, they would again sit down to deep debauch, and drink till morning light, about which time all that had survived the soporific effects of the liquor were commonly engaged in a Polymachia, or battle general; which exertion was for the most part quite as effectual in laying the company low as the Kilbagie. They seemed to fight themselves out, in short; and one by one dropped from the scene, till not a combatant was left. All were on the floor, dead, flat, and peaceable. Sunday morning, which, rising in Scotland, finds all nature reduced to a state of perfect calm, usually found the inmates of Poosie Nansie in the same circumstances. All was quiet; but it was the quiet of desolation. The whole apartment seemed strewn with the ruins of the human race, a heterogeneous chaos of carcasses, heads, arms, women, children, wooden legs, and other fragments of humanity, together with the no less disabled pieces of Nansie's furniture, that were in every respect analagous to the strange beings who used them on the preceding evening.

"Through the course of Sunday, it was observed that the inmates of Nansie's mansion were wonderfully quiet and orderly. If the weather was good, many put off the day by sitting upon turf seats at the door, smoking and talking; while the children lay half naked upon the green, amusing themselves with every species of feat and play, like Nereids sporting on the azure wave. In proportion as the debauch or battle of the preceding evening had been fierce and fatal, the conversations of Sunday were harmonious, and the harmony universal. Whatever were the injuries received in the fray, none of them were remembered. It seemed to be then the general wish that an amnesty should be agreed upon, and no revenge taken for former aggressions. At the close of night, however, the splore was again commenced with considerable briskness. But the festivities of this evening never reached within many degrees of their Saturday night jollifications, in intenseness of enjoyment or obstreperousness of mirth, partly for the sake of decorum, partly on account of low finances, and principally because their spirits, which, suppressed through the week, burst out into the most violent expressions upon Saturday-night, were so far exhausted by the first overflow that little material remained to be expended upon the second. On Monday morning, it was a rich sight to see the crapulous wretches take their departure from Mauchline, with empty wailets, sore heads, and sneaking aspects—so completely spent in every respect by the excesses they had committed, that their wretched appearance looked a thousand times more wretched; and what had formerly seemed only ruins of humanity was now the wreck of ruins."—CHAMBERS.

Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle rang.

First, neist the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae an' blankets warm—
She blinket on her sodger:
An' ay he gied the tozie drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an aumos dish.*
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whup,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up—

AIR.

Tune—*Soldier's Joy.*

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench, [the drum.
When welcoming the French at the sound of
Lal de daudle, &c.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last, [Abram;†
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of
I serv'd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd, [drum.
And the Moro‡ low was laid at the sound of the
Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,§
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot‖ to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

And now tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks, [home,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a

* "Burns here likens a lady's mouth, rather irreverently, to an 'aumos dish;' and, perhaps, few readers of the poems of that immortal bard are aware of what he means by the expression. The 'aumos dish,' or 'beggar's dish,' as it was more frequently called, was a wooden vessel, half platter, half bowl, with which every mendicant was formerly provided, as a regular and proper part of his professional accoutrements. The aumos dish was a piece of furniture attached to the profession from a very early period. In the time of our Queen Mary, when the Protestants of the Netherlands first began to resist the tyranny of Philip II., the Count De Berlaimont contemptuously told the Princess of Parma that she had nothing to fear from such a race of beggars—using the French word *gueux*. The Protestants seized upon, and rejoiced in, the title—*Les Gueux!* At a great dinner, held for the purpose of expressing their sentiments, the Marquis of Utrecht, who acted as president, descended from the chair, and, re-appearing with a beggar's wallet upon his back, and a beggar's *wooden cup* in his hand, drank the general health in that vessel, which was immediately passed round the company, all of whom did the same. When these patriots, afterwards, by a strange enthusiasm, assumed the garb of beggars, the wooden dish was part of the *properties*—to use the theatrical phrase—with which they supported the character. The vessel, which thus flourished in the sixteenth century, was generally used by the Scottish mendicants and tinkers till near the close of the eighteenth, when the old honest system of mendicancy itself came to a close. The following curious account of it is from the pen of a Peebles-shire shepherd, who is old enough to remember its general use.

"'The Beggar's dish was used by two sets of persons,—the itinerant and professed beggars, and the wandering tribes of gypsies. There was no difference in the shape and size of either; but the latter class had theirs often clasped with strong hooks here and there, or perhaps bound round the middle with a neat yellow hoop. As far as I can recollect, it varied in size from a pint and a-half to two Scots pints of measure; but in my father's house at Ettrick hall, I remember one that would have holden, I think, between three and four pints, and it generally went by the appellation of 'the beggar's dish.' I never saw any other plates of their shape or form; they increased gradually in width from the bottom to the middle, and for about two inches more contracted hastily towards the brim, the edge of which was turned very thin, so thin that they very often had rents in several places of their upper edge, and these cracks the tinkers held together with clear or yellow tin, or wire hooks, as noticed above. The beggar's dish was used for two purposes, to receive their *aumos*, and to carry broth, milk, porridge, &c., out to the road side, where the men and beggars' children staid till the return of the wives from the farm-house, with what beverage they could collect either by entreaty or pilfery; and for carrying victuals the beggar's dish was well adapted, for, by its contracting so near the brim, it prevented from spilling what the good housewife had poured into it, and also kept the food warm and comfortable till it reached the principal horde: this case, however, was only applicable to the tinkers. The professional beggar presented himself and his wants all at once. I think I see him, as I have often done, leaning over a long pike staff, as it was called, and saying 'Gudewife, I maun hae my aumos.' 'What d'ye take?' was then asked. In a hoarse, slow tone, it was then answered, 'Meal, or ony thing ye like.' The meal *rusky* was then sought, when the beggar from below his left arm drew out his beggar dish—held it out, and into it the gudewife put some handfuls of meal; but the quantity was adjusted as the beggar stood high or low in the gudewife's esteem—as he was of good or bad report—as he was known or was a stranger in the place—or as he was known to have much or little need. He then poured it into a small sack, or meal pock, as it was called, which was slung over his right shoulder, and hung on his left side, below his left arm, and in above it thrust his dish, unless the gudewife gave him also *kale* or milk; this was also poured into his dish; then if there were many servants, &c., in the house at the time, the beggar generally went to the door, or went out where he could get a seat till he had eaten up his aumos; when this was done, and his pocks all equally balanced about him, he returned to the kitchen, thanked the gudewife for her kindness, wished all the family well, with peace and plenty among them; then leaning on a long white sturdy kent, well shod with iron, on the foot, and which grated among the stones aye as he set it down, slowly retired from the hospitable door.'"—CHAMBERS.

† The battle field in front of Quebec, where General Wolfe fell in the arms of victory, 1759.

‡ [The capture of Havannah, the capital of the Island of Cuba, by the British, in 1762, is the event here alluded to. The Moro, a strong castle defending the place, having been gallantly taken by storm, the city and island surrendered. Fourteen sail of the line, and four frigates were taken or destroyed; and an immense booty, amounting to three millions sterling, fell into the captors' hands.]

§ [The destruction of the Spanish floating batteries, during the famous siege of Gibraltar, 1782, on which occasion the gallant Captain Curtis rendered the most signal service.]

‖ George Augustus Elliot, created Lord Heathfield, for his memorable defence of Gibraltar, during a siege of three years. He died in 1790.

When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of a [drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the kebars sheuk
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore;

A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skir'ld out Encore!
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

Tune—*Soldier Laddie.*

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;
He ventur'd the soul, and I risk'd the body,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song; [steady,
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy:
At length wi' drink and courting dizzy,
He stoiter'd up an' made a face;
Then turn'd, an' laid a smack on Grizzie,
Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR.

Tune.—*Auld Sir Symon.*

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
Sir Knave is a fool in a session;
He's there but a 'prentice I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
And I held awa to the school;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye hae of a fool?

For drink I would venture my neck,
A hizzie's the half o' my craft,
But what could ye other expect,
Of ane that's avowedly daft?

I ance was ty'd up like a stirk,
For civilly swearing and quaffing!
I ance was abus'd in the kirk,
For touzling a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer:
There's ev'n, I'm tauld, i' the Court
A Tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye yon reverend lad
Mak' faces to tickle the mob?
He rails at our mountebank squad—
It's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that's a fool for himsel',
Gude L—d! he's far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then neist outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha ken't, fu' weel to cleek the sterling,
For monie a pursie she had hookit,
And had in monie a well been doukit.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

Tune—*O an ye were dead, gudeman.*

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' guid claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
An' liv'd like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lalland face he feared nane,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But, ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
Nae comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strappan limb and gaucy middle,
(He reach'd nae higher,)
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
An' blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, an' upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo,
Set off wi' Allegretto glee
His giga solo.

AIR.

Tune.—*Whistle o'er the lave o't.*

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear,
And then your ev'ry care and fear
May whistle ower the lave o't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
And O! sae nicely 's we will fare;
We'll bouse about till Daddie Care
Sings whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke,
And sun oursels about the dyke,
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a roosty rapier—

He swoor by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he wad from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.

But tho' his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler press'd her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the caird address'd her:

AIR.

Tune.—*Clout the caudron.*

My bonny lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station:
I've travell'd round all Christian ground,
In this my occupation.
I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron:
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
To go and clout the caudron.
I've ta'en the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a' his noise and cap'rin',
And tak' a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron.
And by that stoup, my faith and houp,
An' by that dear Kilbagie,*
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.
An' by that stoup, &c.

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love, o'ercome sae sair,
An' partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
That show'd a man of spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
An' made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But urchin Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a shavie,
The fiddler rak'd her fore and aft,
Behint the chicken cavie.

* [A peculiar sort of whiskey, so called from Kilbagie distillery in Clackmannanshire. It was a great favourite with Poosie Nansie's Clubs.]

Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,*
Tho' limping wi' the spavie,
He hirpl'd up, and lap like daft,
And shor'd them Dainty Davie
O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed,
Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever miss'd it.
He had nae wish but—to be glad,
Nor want but—when he thirsted;
He hated nought but—to be sad,
And thus the muse suggested
His sang that night.

AIR.

Tune.—*For a' that, an' a' that.*

I am a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks, an' a' that:
But Homer-like, the glowran byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, an' a' that:
But for how lang the flee may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, an' a' that;
But clear your decks, and here's the sex!
I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sang the bard—and Nansie's wa's
Shook wi' a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth;
They toom'd their pocks, an' pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowan drouth.
Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
The poet did request,
To loose his pack an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He, rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

Tune.—*Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses.*

See! the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where!
A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
Thro' the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out—Amen!

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

[This remarkable poem was written in the year 1785, but not published by the poet. It first saw the light in a small volume, printed

* [Homer is universally allowed to be the oldest ballad-singer on record.]

in 1801, at Glasgow, under the title of "Poems ascribed to Robert Burns, the Ayr-shire Bard." It is founded on the Poet's observation of an actual scene which one night met his eye, when, in company with his friends John Richmond, and James Smith, he dropped accidentally, at a late hour, into a very humble inn, in Mauchline, the landlady of which was a Mrs. Gibson,—more familiarly named Poosie Nancy. After witnessing much jollity amongst a company, who by day appeared abroad as miserable beggars, the three young men came away; Burns professing to have been greatly delighted with the scene, but particularly with the gleesome behaviour of an old maimed soldier. In the course of a few days, he recited a part of the poem to Richmond, who has stated that, to the best of his recollection, it contained, in its original complete form, songs by a sweep and a sailor, which do not now appear. The landlady of the house was mother to Racer Jess, alluded to in the *Holy Fair*, and her house was at the left hand side of the opening of the *Cowgate*, mentioned in the same poem, and opposite to the church.

"The original manuscript was long in the hands of John Richmond of Mauchline, and he remembers taking the song of 'Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou," with him to Edinburgh, in 1786; it was given by the poet himself to Mr. Woodburn, factor to the laird of Craigengillan. It afterwards came into the possession of Thomas Stewart, of Greenock, bookseller, by whom a fac-simile of it was published. Mr. Stewart died in November, 1824, and the MS. then became the property of Mr. Lumsden, of Glasgow. The song of 'For a' that, an' a' that,' sung by the bard, is inserted, with some slight modifications, in Johnson's Musical Museum.

"The change-house of Poosie Nansie, where the scene is laid, stood in Mauchline, and was the favourite resort of lame sailors, maimed soldiers, wandering tinkers, travelling ballad-singers, and all such loose companions as hang about the skirts of society. Smith, the 'slee and pawkie thief' of the Epistle, accompanied Burns into Nansie's howff one night, and saw the scene, which the Poet has rendered immortal.—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

"The Jolly Beggars, for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene, indeed, is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge ale-house. Yet, even in describing the movements of such a group, the native taste of the Poet has never suffered his pen to slide into anything coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee and outrageous frolic of the beggars are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags and crutches; the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade.

"Nor is the art of the Poet less conspicuous in the individual figures than in the general mass. The festive vagrants are distinguished from each other by personal appearance and character, as much as any fortuitous assembly in the higher orders of life. The group, it must be observed, is of Scottish character: yet the distinctions are too well marked to escape even the southron. The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp; a stroller, late the consort of a Highland ketterer or sturdy beggar,—'but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!' Being now at liberty, she becomes an object of rivalry between a 'pigmy scraper with his fiddle' and a strolling tinker. The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel, of course. A wandering ballad-singer, with a brace of doxies, is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sing a song in character; and such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected with vivid poetical description, is not, perhaps, to be parallelled in the English language. The concluding ditty, chaunted by the ballad-singer at the request of the company, whose 'mirth and fun have now grown fast and furious,' and set them above all sublunary terrors of jails, and whipping-posts, is certainly far superior to any thing in the Beggar's Opera, where alone we could expect to find its parallel!

"In one or two passages of the *Jolly Beggars*, the muse has slightly trespassed on decorum, where, in the language of Scottish song,

> 'High kilted was she,
> As she gaed owre the lea.'

Something, however, is to be allowed to the nature of the subject, and something to the education of the poet: and if from veneration to the names of Swift and Dryden, we tolerate the grossness of the one, and the indelicacy of the other, the respect due to that of Burns may surely claim indulgence for a few light strokes of broad humour."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

"Such a motley group of vagrants as Burns has so happily described may yet be found in many districts of Scotland. There are houses of rendezvous where the maimed, supplicating soldier—the travelling, ballad-singing fiddler—the sturdy wench, with hands ever ready to steal the pittance which is not bestowed—the rough, black-bearded tinker, with his soldering-irons and pike-staff—and other children of real or pretended misfortune, assemble on a Saturday night to pawn their stolen clothes, dispose of their begged meal, and on their produce to hold merriment and revelry."—CROMEK.

"One of that sturdy class of mendicants, so well painted by both poet and annotator, is still remembered in Nithsdale by the name of 'Auld Penpont.' This provincial worthy was a fellow of infinite drollery and rustic talent: he had a grave speech for the serious—could sing a psalm or pray upon occasion with the devout; but when he met with the young and the thoughtless, he was another man. He told wild stories, chanted wilder songs, and sometimes laid his wallets aside and performed a sort of rustic interlude, called 'Auld Glenae,' with no little spirit and feeling."—CUNNINGHAM.

Death and Doctor Hornbook.

A TRUE STORY.*

SOME books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n ministers, they ha'e been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times,† to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befel,
Is just as true's the Deil's in h-ll
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
's a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, and bushes, kenn'd ay
Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin' down on Willie's mill,‡
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker:
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An' awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three taed leister on the ither
Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma',
As cheeks o' branks.

"Guid-e'en," quo' I; "Friend! hae ye been
When ither folk are busy sawin'?"§ [mawin',
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length, says I, "Friend, whare ye gaun,
Will ye go back?"

It spak right howe,—"My name is Death,
But be na fley'd."—Quoth I, "Guid faith,
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie;
I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith,
See, there's a gully!"

"Guidman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd,
I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

* [In a note to the copy of his works presented to Dr. Geddes, the Poet says, "the hero of the poem is John Wilson, schoolmaster, in Tarbolton. This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook, is professionally a brother of the sovereign order of the ferula, but by intuition and inspiration, he is at once apothecary, surgeon, and physician."—R. B.

"Death and Dr. Hornbook, though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. The schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to eke out the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised that advice would be given, in common disorders, at the shop, gratis. Robert was at a mason-meeting in Tarbolton, when the Dominie made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions mentioned in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of his way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me the next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me."
GILBERT BURNS.

[On his way home, it is said, the Poet found a neighbour lying tipsy by the road-side: the idea of Death flashed on his fancy, and, seating himself on the parapet of a bridge, he composed the Poem, fell asleep, and, when awakened by the morning sun, he recollected it all, and wrote it down on reaching Mossgiel. This took place in the seed-season of 1785, and an epidemical disorder was then raging in the country. Wilson soon afterwards quitted Tarbolton, and repairing to Glasgow engaged in mercantile pursuits, and achieved a moderate independence. He is much respected for his religious feelings and his private worth.]

† [VAR. Great lies and nonsense baith.—MS.]

‡ [Tarbolton Mill, situated on the rivulet Faile, about two hundred yards to the east of the village, on the road to Mossgiel; then occupied by William Muir, an intimate friend of the Burns family—hence called *Willie's mill.* "Mr. William Muir, Tarbolton Mill," appears amongst the subscribers to the Edinburgh edition of the poems, in which the above piece first appeared.]

§ [This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.—R. B.]

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't;
Come, gies your hand, an' sae we're gree't;
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
Come, gies your news;
This while* ye hae been mony a gate,
At mony a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, an shook his head,
"It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
An' choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun Death.

"Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butchering bred,
An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scar me;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
An' faith, he'll waur me.

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan†
An' ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin'
And pouk my hips.

"See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a ——,
Damn'd haet they'll kill.

"'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaen
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
But-deil-ma-care,
It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

"Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortify'd the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
Of a kail-runt.

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I near-hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

"Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Although their face he ne'er had kenn'd it,
Just —— in a kail-blade, and send it,
As soon's he smells't,
Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
At once he tells't.

"And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles
He's sure to hae:
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

"Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True sal-marinum o' the seas;
The farina of beans and pease,
He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fortis, what you please,
He can content ye.

"Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons;
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill'd *per se;*
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

"Waes me for Johnny Ged's Hole‡ now,"
Quo' I, "If that thae news be true!
His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew,
Sae white and bonnie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew;
They'll ruin Johnnie!"

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says, "Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three year.

"Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want of breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap an' pill.

"An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

"A countra laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well.
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
Was laird himsel'.

"A bonnie lass, ye kenn'd her name,§
Some ill-brewn drink had hov'd her wame:
She trusts hersel', to hide the shame,
In Hornbook's care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

* [An epidemical fever was then raging in that country. R. B.]
† [Buchan's Domestic Medicine.] R. B.

‡ [The grave-digger.] R. B.
§ [She was an inn-keeper's daughter.]

"That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
An's weel paid for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his damn'd dirt:

"But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Tho' dinna ye be speaking o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead's a herrin':
Neist time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin'!"

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak' the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which rais'd us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel',
And sae did Death.

["At Glasgow I heard that the hero of this exquisite satire was living; Hamilton managed to introduce me to him—we talked of almost all subjects save the poems of Burns. Dr. Hornbook is above the middle size, stout made, and inclining to corpulency. His complexion is swarthy, his eye black and expressive: he wears a brown wig and dresses in black. There is little or nothing of the pedant about him: I think a man who had never read the poem would scarcely discover any. Burns, I am told, had no personal enmity to Wilson."

CROMEK.]

["When Burns wrote his story of 'Death and Dr. Hornbook,' he had very rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding, put to test by his deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon!—

'But whether she had three or four
He couldna tell.'

Behold a sudden apparition which disperses this disorder, and in a moment chills him into possession of himself! Coming upon no more important mission than the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient or appropriate?"

WORDSWORTH.]

["In the neighbourhood of Tarbolton is situated the farm of Lochlea, where the Poet lived, as a humble denizen of his father's household, from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth year of his age. This, of course, was the clachan to which at that period he resorted for the pleasures of society. He formed here, in 1780, a club of young men, who met monthly, for mutual improvement and entertainment, and of which he and his brother poet, David Sillar, were the leading members: the utmost extent of expenditure on any night was threepence. Here, also, was a lodge of freemasons, which he delighted to attend, and to whom he wrote a farewell, incorporated in his poems. The lodge still exists, and possesses among its records many letters from Burns, some written long after he was locally dissevered from the association, but still breathing an intense interest in its concerns. It was after attending a meeting of this lodge that he wrote his poem entitled 'Death and Doctor Hornbook,' the object of which was to burlesque the schoolmaster, who had offended him that night in the course of argument.

"Hornbook is said to have been a man of ability and education superior to his situation, and his services as a dispenser of medicines must have been useful, as there was then no professional man in the village, nor within many miles of it. He afterwards left the place, in consequence of a dispute about salary with the heritors, and settled in Glasgow, where he rose to be session-clerk of the Gorbals, and is still (1838) alive. He has often been heard over his bowl of punch in the Salt-market to bless the day on which he provoked the castigation of Burns. He was for a long while much missed at Tarbolton, there not being another vender of salts and senna-leaves in the whole country round, nor any medical advice, whatever. There are now three regular doctors in Tarbolton."—CHAMBERS.]

The Kirk's Alarm.*

A SATIRE.

A BALLAD TUNE.—PUSH ABOUT THE BRISK BOWL.

I.

ORTHODOX, orthodox,†
Wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience,
There's a heretic blast
Has been blawn i' the wast,
That what is not sense must be nonsense.

---

* Burns composed or completed this poem in Dumfriesshire, about August 1789, with reference to a case then pending in the church courts of his native district. Dr. William M'Gill, one of the two ministers conjoined in the parochial charge of Ayr, had published, in 1786, *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ, in two parts, containing*, 1, *the History*, 2, *the Doctrine of his Death*, which was supposed to inculcate principles of both Arian and Socinian character, and provoked many severe censures from the more rigid party of the church. M'Gill remained silent under the attacks of his opponents, till Dr. William Peebles of Newton-upon-Ayr, a neighbour, and hitherto a friend, in preaching a centenary sermon on the Revolution, November 5, 1788, denounced the Essay as heretical, and the author as one who "with one hand received the privileges of the church, while, with the other, he was endeavouring to plunge the keenest poignard into her heart." M'Gill published a defence, which led, in April 1789, to the introduction of the

† VAR. Brother Scots, brother Scots.—MS.

II.

Doctor Mac,* Doctor Mac,
Ye should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers† wi' terror;
To join faith and sense
Upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

III.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,‡
It was mad, I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John § is still deaf
To the church's relief,
And orator Bob || is its ruin.

IV.

D'rymple mild,¶ D'rymple mild,
Tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye,
Auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

V.

Rumble John,** Rumble John,
Mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lug out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like adle,
And roar ev'ry note of the damn'd.

VI.

Simper James,†† Simper James,
Leave the fair Killie dames,
There's a holier chace in your view;
I'll lay on your head,
That the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

VII.

Singet Sawney,‡‡ Singet Sawney,
Are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evil §§ await?
Wi' a jump, yell, and howl,
Alarm every soul,
For the foul thief || || is just at your gate.

VIII.

Daddy Auld,¶¶ Daddy Auld,
There's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the clerk;***
Though ye can do little skaith,†††
Ye'll be in at the death,
And if ye canna bite, ye can bark.

IX.

Davie Bluster,‡‡‡ Davie Bluster,
If for a saunt ye do muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits;
Yet to worth let's be just,
Royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass was the king of the brutes.

X.

Jamie Goose,§§§ Jamie Goose, || || ||
Ye ha'e made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked lieutenant;
But the doctor's your mark,
For the L—d's haly ark;
He has cooper'd and ca'd a wrang pin in't.

XI.

Poet Willie,¶¶¶ Poet Willie,
Gi'e the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your "liberty's chain" and your wit;
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he ——****

XII.

Andro Gouk,†††† Andro Gouk,
Ye may slander the book,
And the book nane the waur, let me tell ye;
Tho' ye're rich, and look big,
Yet lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll ha'e a calf's head o' sma' value.

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case into the presbyterial court of Ayr, and subsequently into that of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. Meanwhile, the public out of doors was agitating the question with the keenest interest, and the strife of the liberal and zealous parties in the church had reached a painful extreme. It was now that Burns took up the pen in behalf of M'Gill, whom, it is probable, he sincerely looked on as a worthy and enlightened person suffering an unworthy persecution. The war raged, till, in April 1790, the case came on for trial before the synod, when M'Gill stopped further procedure, by giving in a document expressive of his deep regret for the disquiet he had occasioned, explaining the challenged passages of his book, and declaring his adherence to the standards of the church on the points of doctrine in question. Dr. M'Gill died March 30, 1807, at the age of seventy-six, and in the forty-sixth year of his ministry.—*Murray's Literary History of Galloway.*

* Dr. M'Gill.

† Var. Wicked writers.

‡ [When Dr. M'Gill's case came before the Synod, the magistrates of Ayr published an advertisement in the newspapers, bearing a warm testimony in favour of the Doctor's character, and their appreciation of his services as a Pastor.]

§ [John Ballantine, Esq., provost of Ayr, the same individual to whom the *Twa Brigs* is dedicated.]

|| [Mr. Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, to whom the *Cotter's Saturday Night* is inscribed. He exerted his powerful oratorical talents as agent for Dr. M'Gill in the presbytery and synod.]

¶ The Rev. Dr. William Dalrymple, senior minister of the Collegiate church of Ayr—a man of extraordinary meekness and worth. It is related of him, that one day meeting an almost naked beggar in the country, he took off his coat and waistcoat—gave the latter to the poor man, then put on his coat, buttoned it up, and walked home. He died in 1814, after having fulfilled his pastoral duties for sixty-eight years.

** The Rev. John Russell, celebrated in the *Holy Fair.*

†† The Rev. James M'Kinla, the hero of the *Ordination.*

‡‡ The Rev. Alexander Moodie, of Riccarton, one of the heroes of the *Twa Herds.*

§§ Var. Danger.

|| Var. For Hannibal's. MS.

¶¶ The Rev. Mr. Auld, of Mauchline.

*** The clerk was Mr. Gavin Hamilton, whose defence against the charges preferred by Mr. Auld had occasioned much trouble to this clergyman.

††† Var. Douglas, Heron, and Co.
Has e'en laid you fu' low.—MS.

‡‡‡ Mr. Grant, Ochiltree.

§§§ Var. Billie.—MS.

|||| Mr. Young, of Cumnock.

¶¶¶ The Rev. Dr. Peebles of Newton-upon-Ayr. He had excited some ridicule by a line in a poem on the Centenary of the Revolution:

"And bound in *Liberty's* endearing *chain.*"

The poetry of this gentleman is said to have been indifferent. He translated the *Davideis* of Cowley, which some of his brethren, not exactly understanding what was meant, took the liberty of calling *Dr. Peeble's Daft Ideas.*

**** Var. Ye only stood by where he ——.—MS.

†††† Dr. Andrew Mitchell, Monkton. He was so rich as to be able to keep his carriage. Extreme love of money, and a strange confusion of ideas, characterised this presbyter. In

XIII.

Barr Steenie,* Barr Steenie,
What mean ye, what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may ha'e some pretence
To havins and sense,
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

XIV.

Irvine side,† Irvine side,
Wi' your turkey-cock pride,
O' manhood but sma' is your share,
Ye've the figure, 'tis true,
Even your faes will allow,
And your friends they daur grant you nae mair.

XV.

Muirland Jock,‡ Muirland Jock,
When the L—d makes a rock
To crush Common Sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit,
There's no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ance.

XVI.

Holy Will,§ Holy Will,
There was wit i' your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
The timmer is scant,
When ye're ta'en for a saunt,
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour.

XVII.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons,
Seize your sp'ritual guns,
Ammunition you never can need;
‖ Your hearts are the stuff,
Will be powther enough,
And your skulls are a storehouse o' lead.

XVIII.

Poet Burns, Poet Burns,
Wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Your muse is a gipsie,
E'en tho' she were tipsie,
She could ca' us nae waur than we are.

[In the second version the Poet adds the following POSTSCRIPT.

Afton's Laird, Afton's Laird,¶
When your pen can be spar'd
A copy o' this I bequeath,
On the same sicker score
I mention'd before,
To that trust auld worthy Clackleeth.**]

[The history of the kirk's alarm is curious:—"Macgill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of Original Sin and the Trinity; and the former at length published an essay, which was considered as demanding the notice of the church courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this: and at last, Dr. Macgill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his congregation from the pulpit, which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of Macgill, who was a man of cold unpopular manners, but of unreproached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused, with far more fervid zeal, the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were, of course, on the side of Macgill—Auld and the Mauchline elders, with his enemies. Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of Macgill's cause before the Presbytery, and the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance which soon ripened into a warm friendship with Burns. Burns was, therefore, from the beginning, a zealous, as in the end he was, perhaps, the most effective, partizan of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation."—LOCKHART.]

The eloquence of Aiken and the wit of Hamilton were deeply felt and resented by the partizans of the Old Light. The hue and cry against the latter drew these words of condolence from Burns:—"You have erred—you have committed the blasphemous heresies of squaring religion by the rules of common sense,

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his prayer for the royal family, he would express himself thus:—"Bless the King—his Majesty the Queen—her Majesty the Prince of Wales." The word chemistry he pronounced in three different ways—hemistry, shemistry, and tchemistry—but never, by any chance, in the right way. Notwithstanding the antipathy he could scarcely help feeling towards Burns, one of the Poet's comic verses would make him laugh heartily, and confess that, "after all, he was a droll fellow."]

* Rev. Stephen Young, Barr.

† Rev. Mr. George Smith, Galston. This gentleman is praised as friendly to common sense in the *Holy Fair*. The offence which was taken at that praise probably embittered the poet against him. In another version he is styled "Cessnockside."

‡ Mr. John Shepherd, Muirkirk. The statistical account of Muirkirk contributed by this gentleman to Sir John Sinclair's work is very agreeably written. He had, however, an unfortunate habit of saying rude things, which he mistook for wit, and thus laid himself open to the satire of the Poet. In the second version this verse commences thus:—

Muirland George, Muirland George,
Whom the L—d made a scourge,
To claw Common Sense for her sins.

§ The poor elder in Mauchline, William Fisher, whom Burns has so often scourged.

‖ VAR. With real battle powder,
Be sure double load her,
And the bullet's Divinity lead.

¶ John Logan, Esq. of Afton.

** In the second version of "The Kirk's Alarm" which the Poet sent to Major Logan, the only material variation which he introduces is the repetition of the half of the first and the whole of the last line of each stanza, thus, after Stanza XVIII.:

Poet Burns
She cou'd ca' us nae waur than we are.

and attempting to give a consistent character to Almighty God, and a rational account of his proceedings with the sons of men."

["Mr. Hamilton lived in what is still called the castle of Mauchline—a half-fortified old mansion near the church, forming the only remains of the ancient priory. He was the son of a gentleman who had practised the same profession in the same place, and was, in every respect, a most estimable member of society—generous, affable, and humane. Unfortunately, his religious practice did not square with the notions of the then minister of Mauchline, the 'Daddy Auld' of Burns' Poem, who, in 1785, is found in the session-records to have summoned him for rebuke, on the four following charges:—1. Unnecessary absence from church, for five consecutive Sundays; 2. Setting out on a journey to Carrick on a Sunday; 3. Habitual, if not total, neglect of family worship; 4. Writing an abusive letter to the session in reference to some of their former proceedings respecting him. Strange though this prosecution may seem, it was strictly accordant with the right assumed by clergymen at that period to inquire into the private habits of parishioners."—CHAMBERS.]

"Polemical divinity," says the Poet at this period to Dr. Moore, "was putting the country half-mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, at funerals, &c., used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion that I raised the hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour."

The Twa Herds:

OR,

THE HOLY TULZIE.*

Blockheads with reason wicked wits abhor,
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war.—POPE.

O' a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks,
About the dykes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast,
These five and twenty† simmers past,
O! dool to tell,
Ha'e had a bitter black out-cast
Atween themsel.

O, Moodie, man, and wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle,
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
And think it fine:
The Lord's cause ne'er gat sic a twistle
Sin' I ha'e min'.

O, sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit,
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank?
Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank,
He let them taste.
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear,‡ they drank,—
O sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'-cat, brock, and tod,
Weel kenn'd his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell§ tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,
He kenn'd the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling|| the gospel club,
And New-light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them owre the burning dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't,
Sic famous twa should disagreet,
An' names, like "villain," "hypocrite,"
Ilk ither gi'en,
While New-Light herds,¶ wi laughin' spite,
Say neither's liein'!

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
There's Duncan,** deep, and Peebles, shaul,††
But chiefly thou, apostle‡‡ Auld,§§
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, het and cauld,
Till they agree.|||

* [This satirical ballad first appeared in the Glasgow collection of those pieces which had either been rejected by the fastidious taste of Dr. Currie, or had escaped his notice. It has been collated with a copy in his own hand-writing.]

† VAR. Fifty.—MS.

‡ VAR.—Fountain-head.—MS.

§ Russell is described as a "large, robust, dark complexioned man, imperturbably grave, fierce of temper, and of a stern expression of countenance." He preached with much vehemence and at the height of a tremendous voice, which, in certain states of the atmosphere, caught the ear at the distance of more than a mile. He subsequently became minister at Stirling, where he died at an advanced age.

|| VAR.—Swing.—MS.

¶ VAR.—Enemies.

** Dr. Robert Duncan, Minister of Dundonald. Excepting in his limbs, which were short, he bore a strong personal resemblance to Charles James Fox.

†† Rev. William Peebles, of Newton-upon-Ayr. See notes to *Holy Fair* and *Kirk's Alarm*.

‡‡ Rev. William Auld, Minister of Mauchline.

§§ VAR.—"And chiefly gird thee, 'postle Auld!"—MS.

||| VAR.—"To gar them gree."—MS.

Consider, sirs, how we're beset;
There's scarce a new herd that we get
But comes frae 'mang that cursed set
I winna name;
I hope frae heav'n* to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple† has been lang our fae,
M'Gill‡ has wrought us meikle wae,
And that curs'd rascal ca'd M'Quhae,§
And baith the Shaws,‖
That aft hae made us black and blae,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow¶ lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought aye** death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chiel wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forbye turn-coats amang oursel,
There's Smith for ane,
I doubt he's but a grey-nick quill,
And that ye'll fin'.

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come, join your counsel and your skills
To cowe the lairds,
And get the brutes the powers themsels
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and Dalrymple's eloquence,
M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
And guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart can glance,
May a' pack aff.

"The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light," says Burns to Dr. Moore, "was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my 'Holy Fair.' I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause."

[The twa herds were—Moodie, Minister of Riccarton, and Russell, assistant to the Minister of Kilmarnock, who afterwards had a harmonious call to Stirling. "They were apostles of the Old Light, but this did not hinder controversy, and whilst indulging in a discussion on Effectual Calling, on their way home from the Monday sermon of a Sacrament, they quarrelled by the way, and, as some assert, proceeded to blows. The first intimation which the world of Kyle had of this 'bitter black outcast' was from Russell himself, who was seen approaching the house of Barleith at full gallop.—'Wha can this be, riding in sic a daft-like manner?' exclaimed one.—'It's awfu' like our ain minister, honest man;' said another.—'That can never be,' said John Parker, a decorous man and an elder—'and yet it's him. Na, I'll no believe my ain een!' The doubts of this elder were cut short by the minister himself halting, and explaining the cause of his galloping. On inquiring long afterwards of a person, who was present with Parker, what Russell said, he replied that he heard him say something about the unsound doctrine of Moodie; how that hot words ensued, and he was obliged to give his brother's horse a crack across the nose to put it and its rider back.—'But ye wadna believe me now, if I were to tell you that I think he missed the horse, and hit the minister. Black Russell was na sparing!'

"At the time when Burns was beginning to exercise his powers as a poet, theological controversy raged amongst the clergy and laity of his native country. The prominent parts related to the doctrines of original sin and the Trinity; a scarcely subordinate one referred to the right of patronage. Burns took the moderate and liberal side, and seems to have de-

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* Var.—"I trust in Heav'n."—MS.

† Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, one of the ministers of Ayr. He died in 1814, having enjoyed his charge for the uncommon period of sixty-eight years.

‡ Rev. William M'Gill, one of the ministers of Ayr, and the colleague of Dr. Dalrymple.

§ Minister of St. Quivox, an enlightened man and elegant preacher. He has been succeeded in the parish by his son.

‖ Dr. Andrew Shaw of Craigie, and Dr. David Shaw of Coylton. Dr. Andrew was a man of excellent abilities, but extremely diffident—a fine speaker and an accomplished scholar. Dr. David, in personal respects, was a prodigy. He was ninety-one years of age before he required an assistant. At that period of life he read without the use of glasses, wrote a neat small hand, and had not a furrow in his cheek or a wrinkle in his brow. He was moderator of the General Assembly in 1775. He had a fine old clergymanlike kind of wit. In the house of a man of rank, where he once spent the night, an alarm took place after midnight, which brought all the members of the family from their dormitories. The doctor encountered a countess in her chemise, which occasioned some mutual confusion. At breakfast, next morning, a lady asked him what he thought when he met the countess in the lobby. "Oh, my lady," said he, "I was in a *trance*." Trance, in Scotland, signifies a passage or vestibule, as well as a swoon. This amiable man died, April 26, 1810, in the ninety-second year of his age, and sixty-first of his ministry. —R. Chambers.

¶ There were three brothers of this name, descended from the church historian, and all ministers—one at Eastwood, their ancestor's charge, the second at Stevenston, and the third, Dr. Peter Wodrow, at Tarbolton. Dr. Peter is the person named in the poem. The assistant and successor mentioned in the verse was the Rev. Mr. M'Math, to whom the poet addressed one of his epistles.

** Var.—"Trusted."—MS.

lighted in doing all he could to torment the zealous party, who were designated the *Auld Light*. They appear to have afterwards quarrelled about a question of parish boundaries; and when the point was debated in the Presbytery of Irvine, in presence of a great multitude of the people (including Burns), they lost temper entirely, and 'abused each other,' says Mr. Lockhart, 'with a fiery vehemence of personal invective such as has been long banished from all popular assemblies, wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten code.'

"These satiric sallies were not unavenged. Burns was called unbeliever, profane scoffer, and ungodly rhymer—epithets of influence in those days: and it was moreover represented that the Bachelors' Club of Mauchline, where the poet presided, met for other than moral purposes. Their language was reported as loose, their toasts indecorous, and one of the elders, it is said, having caught up two or three wild stanzas, scattered by Burns at one of those mirthful meetings, kept repeating them wherever he went, saying, at the end of every verse, 'Oh, what a wild lad! A lost sheep—a lost sheep!'"—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

Holy Willie's Prayer.*

O THOU, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here, afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace,
A burnin' an' a shinin' light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plung'd me into hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Whare damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample;
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example,
To a' thy flock.

[O L—d, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singing there, and dancing here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.]

But yet, O L—d! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
And sometimes, too, wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

[O L—d! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O may it ne'er be a livin' plague
To my dishonour,
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.]

Besides, I farther maun avow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times I trow—
But, L—d, that Friday I was fou',

* Kennedy gives the following account of the origin of "Holy Willie's Prayer:"—Gavin Hamilton, Esq., Clerk of Ayr, the Poet's friend and benefactor, was accosted one Sunday morning by a mendicant, who begged alms of him. Not recollecting that it was the sabbath, Hamilton set the man to work in his garden, which lay on the public road, and the poor fellow was discovered by the people on their way to the kirk, and they immediately stoned him from the ground. For this offence, Mr. Hamilton was not permitted to have a child christened, which his wife bore him soon afterwards, until he applied to the synod. His most officious opponent was William Fisher, one of the elders of the Church: and to revenge the insult to his friend, Burns made him the subject of this humorous ballad.

It was no doubt to this satire that the subjoined *jeu d'esprit* refers.

"In the name of the Nine, Amen.

"We, Robert Burns, by virtue of a warrant from nature, bearing date the twenty-fifth day of January, anno domini, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, poet laureate and bard in chief, in and over the districts and countries of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, of old extent, to our trusty and well beloved William Chalmers and John Mc Adam, students and practitioners in the ancient and mysterious science of confounding right and wrong.

"Right trusty,

"Be it known unto you, that whereas, in the course of our care and watchings over the order and police of all and sundry the manufacturers, retainers and venders of poesy; bards, poets, poetasters, rhymers, jinglers, songsters, ballad-singers, &c. &c. male and female—we have discovered a certain nefarious, abominable and wicked song, or ballad, a copy whereof we have here inclosed; our will, therefore, is, that ye pitch upon and appoint the most execrable individual of that most execrable species, known by the appellation, phrase, and nickname of the Deil's Yeld Nowte; and after having caused him to kindle a fire at the cross of Ayr, ye shall, at noontide of the day, put into the said wretch's merciless hands, the said copy of the said nefarious and wicked song, to be consumed by fire in the presence of all beholders, in abhorrence of, and terrorem to, all such compositions and composers. And this in no wise leave ye undone, but have it executed in every point as this our mandate bears, before the twenty-fourth current, when in person we hope to applaud your faithfulness and zeal.

"Given at Mauchline, this twentieth day of November, anno domini one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six.

"God save the Bard!"

When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

Maybe thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

L—d, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race:
But G—d confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
And public shame.

L—d, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts,
Wi' great and sma',
Frae G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.*

An' whan we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us; —
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.†

L—d, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against the presbyt'ry of Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, L—d, mak' it bare
Upo' their heads,
L—d, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O L—d my G—d, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,‡
My very heart and saul are quakin',
To think how we stood groanin', shakin',
And swat wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hinging lip gaed snakin',
And hid his head.

L—d, in the day of vengeance try him,
L—d, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r;
But for thy people's sake destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, L—d, remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
An' a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

Epitaph on Holy Willie.

Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Taks up its last abode;
His saul has ta'en some other way,
I fear, the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor, silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black 's the grun,—
Observe wha's standing wi' him!

Your brunstane devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,
Till ance ye've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye hae nane!
Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, sir, deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

["'Holy Willie's Prayer' is a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns ever afterwards wrote."—Sir Walter Scott.]

[The "Holy Willie" of this sarcastic but too daring poem, was one William Fisher, a farmer near Mauchline, and leading Elder of the Rev. Mr. Auld's Session. He was a great pretender to sanctity, austere of speech, and punctilious about outward observances. Yet he was by no means rigid as far as regarded himself: he scrupled not to "get fou," when whiskey flowed at the expense of others: he was more particular too in the examination of female transgressors than some of his brethren thought was seemly; and when he left Mauchline for an eldership in a neighbouring parish, it was discovered he had

* ["It is amusing to observe how soon even really Bucolic bards learn the tricks of their trade: Burns knew already what lustre a compliment gains from being set in sarcasm, when he made Willie call for special notice to

——"Gawn Hamilton's deserts."

Lockhart.]

† [In 1787, a new offence in the eyes of the Kirk-synod was committed by Mr. Hamilton. He had, on a Sunday morning, ordered a servant to take in some potatoes which happened to have been left out in the garden after being dug. This came to the ears of the minister, and Mr. Hamilton was summoned to answer for the offence. Some ludicrous details occur in the session-records. It is there alleged that two and a half rows of potatoes were dug on the morning in question, by Mr. Hamilton's express order, and carried home by his daughter: nay, so keen had the spirit of persecution been, that the rows had been formally measured, and found to be each eleven feet long; so that twenty-seven feet and a half altogether had been dug. The Presbytery, or Synod, treated this prosecution in the same way as the former, and Burns did not overlook it in his poems. He alludes to it in Holy Willie's Prayer, when he makes that individual implore a curse upon Mr. Hamilton's

—— basket and his store,
Kail and *potatoes*—"

Chambers.]

‡ "Nor is his other patron, Aiken, introduced with inferior skill, as having merited Willie's most fervent execration by his 'glib-tongued' defence of the heterodox doctor of Ayr:

'L—d, visit them wha did employ him,'

"Burns owed a compliment to this gentleman's elocutionary talents. 'I never knew that there was any merit in my poems,' said he, 'until Mr. Aiken *read them* into repute.'" Lockhart.

made too free with the money of the poor. His end was any thing but godly: he drank more than was proper during one of his visits to Mauchline, and was found dead in a ditch on his way to his own house.

It is related, by John Richmond of Mauchline, that when he was a clerk in Gavin Hamilton's office, Burns came in one morning and said, "I have just been making a poem, and if you will write it, John, I'll repeat it." He accordingly, to Richmond's surprise, repeated "Holy Willie's Prayer:" Hamilton came in, read it, and ran laughing with it to Robert Aiken—and the latter was delighted.—A. C.]

The Inventory.

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF TAXES.

SIR, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
O' gudes an' gear, an' a' my graith,
To which I'm clear to gi'e my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I ha'e four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle.
My lan'-afore's* a gude auld *has-been*,
An' wight an' wilfu' a' his day 's been.
My lan'-ahin's† a weel gaun fillie,
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,‡
An' your auld burro' mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime—
But ance, whan in my wooing pride,
I, like a blockhead boost to ride,
The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,
(L—d pardon a' my sins, an' that too!)
I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,
She's a' bedevil'd wi' the spavie.
My fur ahin's§ a wordy beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd.
The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,
A d—n'd red-wud Kilburnie blastie!
Forbye a cowte, o' cowte's the wale,
As ever ran afore a tail:
If he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.—

Wheel carriages I ha'e but few,
Three carts, an' twa are feckly new;
An auld wheel-barrow, mair for token,
Ae leg an' baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
An' my auld mither brunt the trin'le.

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run-de'ils for rantin' an' for noise;
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t'other.
Wee Davoc hauds the nowte in fother.
I rule them, as I ought, discreetly,
An' aften labour them completely;
An' ay on Sundays duly, nightly,
I on the question targe them tightly,
Till, faith, wee Davoc's turn'd sae gleg,
Tho' scarcely langer than my leg,
He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling,‖
As fast as ony in the dwalling.—

I've nane in female servan' station,
(L—d keep me ay frae a' temptation!)
I ha'e nae wife, and that my bliss is,
An' ye ha'e laid nae tax on misses;
An' then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the devils darena touch me.
Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heav'n sent me ane mair than I wanted.
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,¶
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace;
But her, my bonnie sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
An' gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the L—d! ye'se get them a' thegither.

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I'm takin';
Frae this time forth, I do declare,
I'se ne'er ride horse nor hizzie mair;
Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;
My travel a' on foot I'll shank it,
I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit.
The kirk and you may tak' you that,
It puts but little in your pat;
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list wi' my ain hand I've wrote it,
The day and date as under noted;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic ROBERT BURNS.

Mossgiel, February 22, 1786.

"The 'Inventory' was written in answer to a mandate sent by Mr. Aiken of Ayr, the surveyor of the windows, carriages, &c., for the district, to each farmer, ordering him to send a signed list of his horses, servants, wheel-carriages, &c., and to state whether he was a married man or a bachelor, and also the number of his children. The poem is chiefly remarkable for the information it gives concerning the farm, the household, and the habits of Burns. Mossgiel lies about a mile distant from Mauchline; the cultivation has not prevailed against the cold clay-bottom, which, with untimely rains, brought

* The foremost-horse on the left-hand in the plough. R. B.

† The hindmost-horse on the left-hand in the plough. R. B.

‡ Kilmarnock. R. B.

§ The hindmost horse on the right-hand in the plough. R.B.

‖ "What is Effectual Calling?" A leading question in the shorter catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines—generally used in Scotland.

¶ A child born to the Poet by a young woman of the name of Elizabeth Paton, servant to the Poet's mother at Mossgiel. She grew up extremely like her father, and became the wife of Mr. John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet in Linlithgowshire, and died there, December 8, 1817.

ruin to the Poet's labours: it is more suitable for grazing than cropping, and at this period produces excellent cheese.

"Mauchline is a parish town of above a thousand inhabitants; in ancient times, it was the seat of a priory belonging to Melrose, but now differs in no respect from a common agricultural village. It is situated upon a slope ascending from the margin of the Ayr, from which it is about two miles distant. One might at first suppose that a rustic population, like that of Mauchline, would form but a poor field for the descriptive and practical genius of Burns. It is wondrous, however, how variously original many of the inhabitants of the most ordinary Scottish villages will contrive to be. In a small town the character of every man is well known; so that every thing he says or does appears to his fellows as characteristic."—CHAMBERS.

Adam A——'s Prayer.

GUDE pity me, because I'm little,
For though I am an elf o' mettle,
And can, like ony wabsters' shuttle,
Jink there or here;
Yet scarce as lang 's a guid kail whittle,
I'm unco queer.

And now thou kens our wofu' case,
For Geordie's Jurr* we're in disgrace,
Because we stang'd her through the place,
And hurt her spleuchan'
For which we daurna show our face
Within the clachan.

And now we're dern'd in glens and hollows,
And hunted, as was William Wallace,
Wi' constables, those blackguard fallows,
And sogers baith;
But Gude preserve us frae the gallows,
That shamefu' death!

Auld grim black-bearded Geordie's sel',
O shake him o'er the mouth o' hell,
There let him hing, and roar, and yell,
Wi' hideous din,
And if he offers to rebel,
Just heave him in.

When death comes in, wi' glimmering blink,
And tips auld drucken Nanse† the wink,
May Hornie gie her doup a clink
Ahint his yett,
Aud fill her up wi' brimstone drink
Red, reeking, het.

There's Jockie and the hav'rel Jenny,‡
Some devils seize them in a hurry,
And waff them in th' infernal wherry
Straught through the lake,
And gi'e their hides a noble curry,
Wi' oil of aik.

As for the Jurr, poor worthless body,
She's got mischief enough already;
Wi' stanged hips, and buttocks bluidy,
She's suffered sair;
But may she wintle in a woodie,
If she wh—e mair.

The Holy Fair.

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in Religion.

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

I.

UPON‖ a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller air.
The rising sun owre Galston¶ muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin';
The hares were hirplin' down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin'
Fu' sweet that day.

II.

As lightsomely I glow'r'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin' up the way;

* ["Jurr" is in the west of Scotland a colloquial term for "journeyman," and is often applied to designate a servant of either sex.

The circumstances here alluded to were as follows:—A certain Mauchline innkeeper, named George, had a female servant who had been too indulgent to one of her master's male customers. This brought her into such odium in the village that a number of reckless young persons, among whom Adam A——, an ill-made little fellow, was a ringleader, violently 'rade the stang' upon her; that is, placed her astride upon a rantletree, or other wooden pole, and in this woeful plight unfeelingly carried the poor girl through the town, by which means she sustained much personal *skaith* as well as *scorn*. The girl's master and mistress highly resented this lawless outrage, and raised an action at law against the principals, which occasioned Adam A—— to abscond. While skulking under hiding, Burns met him, and, knowing his situation, said, "Adam, puir fallow, ye wad need somebody to pray for you;" to which Adam rejoined, "Just do't yoursel', Burns, I know no one so fit." The above poem was the result: it bears unquestionable marks of the characteristic genius of Burns, although we cannot but regret his wielding his satiric pen in such a cause.]

† Geordie's wife.

‡ Geordie's son and daughter.

§ Holy Fair is a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a Sacramental occasion.—R. B.

["These annual celebrations," says Heron, "had much in them of those old popish festivals, in which superstition, traffic, and amusement, used to be strangely intermingled." Encouraged by the 'roar of applause' which greeted these pieces, thus orally promulgated and recommended, Burns produced in succession various satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed; as The Ordination: The Kirk's Alarm, &c. &c.; and last, and best undoubtedly, The Holy Fair."—LOCKHART.]

‖ VAR. 'Twas on.—MS.

¶ The adjoining parish to Mauchline.

Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a-wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining
Fu' gay that day.

III.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes;
Their visage, wither'd, lang, an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes:
The third cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

IV.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, an' laughin' as she spak,
An' taks me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gi'en * the feck,
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.†

V.

"My name is Fun—your cronie dear,
The nearest friend ye hae;
An' this is Superstition here,
An' that's Hypocrisy.
I'm gaun to Mauchline holy fair,
To spend an hour in daffin':
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd pair,
We will get famous laughin'
At them this day."

VI.

Quoth I, "With a' my heart, I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
An' meet you on the holy spot;
Faith, we'se hae fine remarkin'!" ‡
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

VII.

Here farmers gash, in ridin' graith;
Gaed hoddin' by their cotters;
There, swankies young, in braw braid-claith,
Are springin' owre the gutters;
The lasses, skelpin' barefit, thrang,
In silks an' scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,
An' farls, bak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

VIII.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glow'r black bonnet§ throws,
An' we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gath'rin',
Some carrying dails, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy bleth'rin'
Right loud that day.

IX.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
An' screen our countra gentry,
There, Racer Jess,‖ and twa-three wh-res,
Are blinkin' at the entry.
Here sits a raw of tittlin' jades,
Wi' heaving breast an' bare neck,
An' there a batch o' wabster lads,¶
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day.

X.

Here, some are thinkin' on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes; **
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen †† swatch,
Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud ‡‡ faces;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

XI.

O happy is that man an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair-back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

XII.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation:
For Moodie §§ speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.‖ ‖

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* Var. Broke.—MS.

† By night or day.—MS.

‡ Var. Quoth I, I'll get my tither coat,
An' on my Sunday's sark,
An' meet ye in the yard without,
At op'ning o' the wark.—MS.

§ Var. The Elder.—MS.

["Black bonnet" a colloquial appellation, bestowed on the Church-elders or deacons, who in landward parishes in the olden time generally wore black bonnets, on Sundays, when they officiated at 'the plate' in making the usual collection for the poor.—Motherwell.]

‖ Var. Bet B——r there.—MS.

[The following notice of Racer Jess appeared in the newspapers of February, 1818:—"Died at Mauchline a few weeks since, Janet Gibson, consigned to immortality by Burns in his 'Holy Fair,' under the turf appellation of 'Racer Jess.' She was the daughter of 'Poosie Nansie,' who figures in 'The Jolly Beggars.' She was remarkable for her pedestrian powers, and sometimes ran long distances for a wager."]

¶ Var. Brawls.—MS.

** Var. An' ithers on.—MS.

†† Var. An elect.—1st. Edit.

‡‡ Var. Wi' mercy-beggin.'—MS.

§§ Var. Sawnies.—[Moodie was the minister of Riccarton, and one of the heroes of *The Twa Herds*. He was a never-failing assistant at the Mauchline sacraments. His personal appearance and style of oratory were exactly such as described by the poet. He dwelt chiefly on the terrors of the law. On one occasion, he told the audience that they would find the text in John viii. 44, but it was so applicable to their case, that there was no need of his reading it to them. The verse begins, "Ye are of your father the Devil."]

‖‖ ["Originally printed 'salvation' in the first edition of the author's poems, but altered as above in the second, at

Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
To's ain het hame * had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

XIII.

Hear now he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin' an' wi' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin' an' he's jumpin'!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch squeel and gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day!

XIV.

But, hark! the tent has chang'd its voice!
There's peace and rest nae langer:
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger.
Smith † opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

XV.

What signifies his barren shine,
Of moral pow'rs and reason? ‡
His English style, an' gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

XVI.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For Peebles, § frae the water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While Common-Sense || has ta'en the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate, ¶
Fast, fast, that day.

XVII.

Wee Miller, ** neist the guard relieves,
An' orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannily he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

XVIII.

Now but an' ben, the change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup commentators:
Here's crying out for bakes and gills,
And there the pint-stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic, an' wi' scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

XIX.

Leeze me on drink! it gi'es us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whiskey gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

XX.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent,
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the toddy. ††
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're making observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
An' formin' assignations
To meet some day.

XXI.

But now the L—d's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin',
An' echoes back return the shouts;
Black Russell ‡‡ is na spairin':

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the suggestion of Dr. Blair, who expressed a very high opinion of this Poem."]

* Var. To H—ll wi' speed.—MS.

† Var. Geordie begins.—MS. Mr. (afterwards Dr) George Smith, minister of Galston—the same whom the poet introduces, in a different feeling, under the appellation of Irvine-side, in *The Kirk's Alarm*. Burns meant on this occasion to compliment him on his rational mode of preaching, but the reverend divine regarded the stanza as satirical.

‡ Var. It's no nae Gospel truth divine
To cant o' sense an' reason.—MS.

§ The Rev. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) William Peebles, minister of Newton-upon-Ayr, and the moving hand in the prosecution of Dr. M'Gill, on which account he is introduced into *The Kirk's Alarm*. He was in great favour at Ayr among the orthodox party, though much inferior in ability to the heterodox ministers of that ancient burgh. Robert Hamilton, a crack-pated pauper, who lived long in Ayr, and amused every body by his droll sayings, one day thus addressed a citizen, in the hearing of one of these heretical gentlemen: —"I dreamt yestreen I was dead, and at the door o' heaven; and whan I knockit at the door, Peter said, 'Wha's there?' 'It's me, Mr. Robert Hamilton.' 'Whare d'ye come frae?' 'Frae the toon o' Ayr.' 'Get awa wi' ye! Ye canna get in here. There has nane been admitted frae that toon this twa hunner year.' Whan I gang back, I'll say I'm come frae Prestwick, or the Newton." Meaning, in the latter case, that he would have the benefit of the reputation of Mr. Peebles's ministrations.

|| Dr. Mackenzie, then of Mauchline, afterwards of Irvine, had recently conducted some village controversy under the title of *Common Sense*. Some local commentators are of opinion that he, and not the personified abstraction, is meant.

¶ A street so called which faces the tent in Mauchline.—R. B. The same street in which Jean Armour lived.

** The Rev. Mr. Miller, afterwards minister of Kilmaurs. He was of remarkably low stature, but enormous girth. Burns believed him at the time to lean at heart to the moderate party. This stanza, virtually the most depreciatory in the whole poem, is said to have retarded Miller's advancement.

†† Var.—The lads an' lasses blythely bent,
Their lowan drowth to quench;
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the punch. (!)—MS.

‡‡ Var.—Kilmarnock
[The Rev. John Russell, at this time minister of the

His piercing words, like Highlan' swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell;
Our vera "sauls does harrow"*
Wi' fright that day.

XXII.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fu' o' lowin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin' flame, an' scorchin' heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear
'Twas but some neibor snorin'
Asleep that day.

XXIII.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell,
How monie stories past,
An' how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,†
Amang the furms an' benches:
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds that day.

XXIV.

In comes a gaucie, gash guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne‡ draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gi'es them 't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

XXV.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives, be mindfu' ance yoursel
How bonnie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

XXVI.

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin' tow,
Begins to jow and croon;§
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
They 're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

XXVII.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin
May end in houghmagandie
Some ither day.

[This is a most extraordinary poem, and was received both with admiration and terror. Divines vented their anathemas on the poet in all their private and public meetings, and were

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chapel of ease, Kilmarnock, afterwards minister of Stirling—one of the heroes of *The Twa Herds*. A correspondent says, "He was the most tremendous man I ever saw: Black Hugh Macpherson was a beauty in comparison. His voice was like thunder, and his sentiments were such as must have shocked any class of hearers in the least more refined than those whom he usually addressed."]

["Russel came from Moray; he obtained the school of Cromarty, was no favourite with the scholars, and was one of those who mistake severity for duty. He was a large, robust, dark-complexioned man, imperturbably grave, fierce of temper, and had a stern expression of countenance. It is said that a lady, who had been one of his pupils, actually fainted when she heard him, many years afterwards, speak of transgressions from the pulpit. One of his boys, who usually carried the key of the school in his pocket, happened to lose it one day, and got such a flogging that, when he grew up to be a man, in all cases of mental perturbation and misery, he groped in his pocket, as he did on that fatal morning for the key. He became popular as a preacher; his manner was strong and energetic; the severity of his temper was a sort of genius to him while he described, which he loved to do, the tortures of the wicked in a future state. He printed some of his sermons: they are of a controversial nature, and written in a bold, rough style, and fitter to be listened to than read. He set himself against sabbath-breaking; and used to take his stand at one of the streets leading from the town, and turn transgressors back by the shoulders.

"It was not an unwelcome call to some of the citizens, which took Russell from Cromarty to a chapel of ease in Kilmarnock. A native of Cromarty, who happened to be at that time in the west of Scotland, walked to Mauchline, to hear his old schoolmaster preach at the Sacrament: this was about 1792. There was an excellent sermon to be heard from the tent, and excellent drink to be had in a neighbouring ale-house, and between the two the people seemed much divided. A young clergyman was preaching, and Russell was nigh him: at every fresh movement of the people, or ungodly burst of sound from the ale-house, the latter would raise himself on tiptoe—look sternly towards the change-house, and then at his younger brother in the pulpit: at last his own time to preach arrived—he sprang into the tent—closed the bible—and, without psalm or prayer, or other preliminary matter, burst out at once into a passionate and eloquent address upon the folly and sin which a portion of the people were committing. The sound in the ale-house ceased—the inmates came out and listened to the denunciation, which some of them remembered with a shudder in after-life. He lived to a great age, and was always a dauntless and intrepid man: when seventy years old or so, he saw a Cromarty man beaten down in the streets of Stirling: Russell elbowed the crowd aside, plucked the sufferer, like a brand, from the burning, saying, 'Waes me, that your father's son should behave like a blackguard in the town where I am a minister.' He grew temperate in his sermons as he grew old, and became a great favourite with the more grave and staid portion of his people."—*Communicated to Allan Cunningham by Hugh Millar, of Cromarty.*]

* Shakespeare's Hamlet, R. B.

† VAR.—"How *yill* gaed round in *jugs* an' caups."—MS.

‡ VAR.—"Then."

§ VAR.—"Then Robin Gib, wi' weary jow,
Begins to clink an' croon."—MS.

terrified to preach before him. It is no doubt a reckless piece of satire, but it is a clever one, and one that must have cut to the bone. It is a masterpiece of the kind, for in it satire keeps its own place, and is made subservient to the poetry of Burns. No partisan of any sect could insinuate that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, accustomed to respect and veneration, were held up to ridicule. It was acknowledged, even amidst the sternest breathings of wrath, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet. That could not be denied by those who shook their heads most gravely over the indiscretions of particular passages, or even by those who justly regretted a too prevailing tone of levity in the treatment of a subject essentially solemn. It is devoutly to be wished that he had taken up the subject in a different light: how many pure and holy feelings had then presented themselves to the bard of the Cotter's Saturday Night. And to him who drew so powerfully from the feelings of a sensitive heart, what a field was opened! It is, however, an admirable piece, and I would recommend every reader to peruse the eleventh stanza as the best description that ever was given; "unkenn'd that day" surpasses all.—THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.]

[The names in the text are supplied from a copy of the first edition, in which they were written by the poet himself; and the variations are from a copy in his own handwriting. The scene is laid in the churchyard of Mauchline: the clergyman of the parish, with his assistants, are exhibited on the stage, while the lay members of the congregation, swelled by auxiliary weavers from Kilmarnock, compose the numerous persons of the under-plot of the piece.

Fergusson, in his *Hallow Fair of Edinburgh*, I believe, furnished a hint of the title and plan of the *Holy Fair*. The farcical scene the poet there describes was often a favourite field of his observation, and most of the incidents he mentions had actually passed before his eyes.—GILBERT BURNS.]

[The opening of the poem bears a nearer resemblance to Fergusson's *Leith Races* than to his *Hallow Fair*. In *Leith Races*, the Edinburgh bard is conducted to the festive scene by an imaginary being, whom he names MIRTH, exactly as Burns is conducted to the Holy Fair by FUN; but the poetical painting of the Ayrshire bard far distances that of his predecessor. The following three stanzas of Fergusson, however, are excellent:—

" In July month, ae bonnie morn,
When nature's rokelay green
Was spread o'er ilka rig o' corn,
To charm our roving een;
Glow'rin' about I saw a quean,
The fairest 'neath the lift;
Her een were o' the siller sheen,
Her skin like snawy drift,
Sae white that day.

* * * * * * *

"'And wha are ye, my winsome dear,
That taks the gate sae early?
Whare do ye win? gin ane may spear,
For I right meikle ferley,
That sic braw buskit laughin' lass,
Their bonnie blinks should gie,
And loup like Hebe owre the grass,
As wanton and as free,
Frae dool this day.'

"'I dwell among the caller springs,
That weet the land o' cakes,
And often tune my canty strings,
At bridals and late wakes;
They ca' me MIRTH: I ne'er was kenn'd,
To grumble or look sour:
But blithe wad be a lift to lend,
Gif ye wad see my power
And pith this day.' "]

[The transactions described in this poem are those which attended a rural celebration of the communion in Scotland till a very recent period, if not till the present day. But it is important to notice that the rite itself, and even the place where it was administered, form no part of the picture. Burns limits himself to the assemblage, partly composed of parishioners, and partly of strangers, which always takes place on such occasions, in some open space near the church, where a succession of clergymen, usually from the neighbouring parishes, give, from a *tent* or moveable pulpit, a succession of services, while a lesser body are attending the more solemn service within doors.

That this scene is not exaggerated, in any particular, is rendered very certain, by the following passage from a pamphlet published in the year of the poet's birth, under the title of *A Letter from a Blacksmith to the Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland*. "In Scotland, they run from kirk to kirk, and flock to see a sacrament, and make the same use of it that the papists do of their pilgrimages and processions; that is, indulge themselves in drunkenness, folly, and idleness. Most of the servants, when they agree to serve their masters, in the western parts of the kingdom, make a special provision that they shall have liberty to go to a certain number of fairs, or to an equal number of sacraments; and as they consider a sacrament, or an occasion (as they call the administration of the Lord's Supper), in a neighbouring parish, in the same light in which they do a fair, so they behave at it much in the same manner. I defy Italy, in spite of all its superstition, to produce a scene better fitted to raise pity and regret in a religious, humane, and understanding heart, or to afford an ampler field for ridicule to the careless and profane, than what they call a field-preaching upon one of those occasions. At the time of the administration of the Lord's Supper upon the Thursday,

Saturday, and Monday, we have preaching in the fields near the church. At first, you find a great number of men and women lying together upon the grass; here they are sleeping and snoring, some with their faces towards heaven, others with their faces turned downwards, or covered with their bonnets; there you find a knot of young fellows and girls making assignations to go home together in the evening, or to meet in some ale-house; in another place, you see a pious circle sitting round an ale-barrel, many of which stand ready upon carts for the refreshment of the saints. The heat of the summer season, the fatigue of travelling, and the greatness of the crowd, naturally dispose them to drink; which inclines some of them to sleep, works up the enthusiasm of others, and contributes not a little to produce those miraculous conversions that sometimes happen at these occasions; in a word, in this sacred assembly, there is an odd mixture of religion, sleep, drinking, courtship, and a confusion of sexes, ages, and characters. When you get a little nearer the speaker, so as to be within the reach of the sound, though not of the sense of the words (for that can only reach a small circle), you will find some weeping, and others laughing—some pressing to get nearer the tent or tub in which the parson is sweating, bawling, jumping, and beating the desk; others fainting with the stifling heat, or wrestling to extricate themselves from the crowd: one seems very devout and serious, and the next moment is scolding and cursing his neighbour for squeezing or treading on him; in an instant after, his countenance is composed to the religious gloom, and he is groaning, sighing, and weeping for his sins;—in a word, there is such an absurd mixture of the serious and comic that, were we convened for any other purpose than that of worshipping the God and Governor of Nature, the scene would exceed all *power of face.*" Happily, the above description is no longer applicable to Scotland. The satiric pen of the poet has effected miracles in the way of reformation.]

["There are traits of infinite merit in 'Scotch Drink,' 'The Holy Fair,' 'The Hallow E'en,' &c.; in all of which it is very remarkable that the Poet rises occasionally into a strain of beautiful description or of lofty sentiment, far above the pitch of his original conception."—JEFFREY.]

[David Sillar, the Scottish Poet, thus bears testimony to the accuracy of Burns's description of "The Holy Fair:"—

"When ye paint the 'Holy Fair,'
Ye draw it to a very hair."

The Ordination.

"For sense they little owe to frugal heav'n—
To please the mob they hide the little giv'n."

I.

KILMARNOCK wabsters fidge an' claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha' leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations,*
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's† in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

II.

Curst Common-Sense, that imp o' hell,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;‡
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
An' Russell sair misca'd her;
This day Mackinlay taks the flail,
And he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

III.

Mak haste an' turn king David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirl up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her pow'r,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

IV.

Come, let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham§ leugh at his dad,
Which made Canaan a nigger;

* Kilmarnock was then a town of between three and four thousand inhabitants, most of whom were engaged in the manufacture of carpets and other coarse woollen goods, or in the preparation of leather.

† A tavern near the church kept by a person of this name.

‡ Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr. Lindsay to the Laigh Kirk. R. B.

[This note by Burns is far from sufficient to explain his allusion to a modern reader.—Mr. Lindsay, ordained to the Laigh Kirk in 1764, was the first moderate clergyman known in the place. He was supposed to have obtained the appointment through the interest of his wife, whose maiden name was Margaret Lauder, who had been housekeeper to the Earl of Glencairn, patron of the kirk:—hence the scoffing ballad to which the poet refers. The general meaning of the stanza is, that Common Sense, in other words, Arminian doctrine, was introduced into the church of Kilmarnock by Mr. Lindsay; that Oliphant and Russell, two zealous Calvinists, had often attacked her; but that now Mr. Mackinlay, the new entrant, was likely to effect her complete extrusion. We obtain a notion of the general feeling of Kilmarnock, respecting the moderate doctrine, from the fact that Mr. Lindsay's induction had to be effected by the use of force, and that his friends of the Presbytery were on that occasion so pelted as to be obliged to fly from the town.

ROBERT CHAMBERS.]

§ Genesis ix. 22.

Or Phineas* drove the murdering blade,
Wi' wh-re-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah,† the scauldin' jade,
Was like a bluidy tiger ‡
I' th' inn that day.

V.

There, try his mettle on the creed
And bind him down wi' caution,
That stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion;
And gie him o'er the flock, to feed,
And punish each transgression; §
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin',
Spare them nae day.

VI.

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
An' toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' runts o' grace the pick and wale,
No gi'en by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

VII.

Nae mair by Babel's streams we'll weep,
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin';
Come, screw the pegs, wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin';
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
An' a' like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day!

VIII.

Lang Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin',
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
He saw mischief was brewin';
And, like a godly elect bairn,
He's wal'd us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

IX.

Now, Robinson,‖ harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever:
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they'll think you clever:
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton ¶ repair,
And turn a carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

X.

Mutrie,** and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:
Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
Just like a winkin' baudrons:
And ay' he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstane squadrons,
Fast, fast†† this day.

XI.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingein' through the city;
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow its unco pretty:
There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty;
And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie ‡‡
Her plaint this day.

XII.

But there's Morality himsel',
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions;
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin' onions!
Now there—they're packed aff to hell,
And banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

XIII.

O, happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!
Morality's demure decoys §§
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture: ‖‖
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cowe her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

XIV.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here's, for a conclusion,
To every New Light ¶¶ mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion:

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* Numbers xxv. 8. † Exodus iv. 25.

‡ Var.

Come wale a text, a proper verse,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How Ham leugh' at his father's ——,
Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phineas did for buttocks pierce
Wi' wh-re-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah, wi' scauldin' hearse,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' th' inn that day.

§ Var.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
Wi' *form'la an' confession,*
An' lay your hands upon his head,
An' seal his high commission,
The holy flock to tent an' feed,
An' punish each transgression;
&c.

‖ The colleague of the newly ordained clergyman—a moderate.

¶ A part of the town of Kilmarnock.

** The deceased Clergyman whom Mr. Mackinlay succeeded.

†† Var. *Fu' fast.*—MS.

‡‡ The well-known Author of the Essay on Truth.

§§ Var. *Delusive joys.*—MS.

‖‖ Var. *Will clap him in the torture.*—MS.

¶¶ "New Light" is a cant phrase, in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.—R. B.

If mair they deave us with their din,
Or patronage intrusion,
We'll light a spunk, and, ev'ry skin,
We'll rin them aff in fusion
Like oil, some day.

[This boisterous satire was written on the admission of the Rev. Mr. Mackinlay as one of the ministers of the Laigh or Parochial Kirk of Kilmarnock—an event which took place on the 6th of April, 1786. As Mr. Mackinlay was highly orthodox, and succeeded a moderate, the occasion was one of some triumph to the Auld Lights; hence the bitter ironical strain of the poem. Mr. Mackinlay still (1838) survives, being now in the 82d year of his age, and still officiates in the pulpit of which Burns so much grudged him the possession. On the 6th of April, 1836, when he completed the fiftieth year of his ministry, the chief inhabitants of Kilmarnock assembled to the number of two hundred, and treated him to a public dinner: at that time only three or four of those who had met him at his first celebration of the communion survived, and the venerable gentleman was stated to be now associated with his seventh colleague. It is not to be doubted that he has long forgiven this satire, and learned to regard it, as the general public must now only in the light of a literary curiosity."—CHAMBERS.]

[Death has been dealing—to use the language of the old bard—with all the clergymen of the west whom the poet lampooned or praised, save one, and that one is Mackinlay, one of the characters in the "Ordination." He is a good and venerable man: was the friend of Auld, minister of Mauchline, and it was his practice, when he called at his reverend brother's house, to shake hands, kneel down, and unite in asking a blessing from above on their ministry, and on the flocks committed to their charge. There is something apostolical or primitive in this.—A. C.]

The Calf.

TO THE REV. MR. JAMES STEVEN.

On his text, MALACHI iv. 2.—"And they shall go forth, and grow up, like CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT, Sir! your text I'll prove it true,
Though Heretics may laugh;
For instance; there's yoursel' just now,
God knows, an unco Calf!

And should some patron be so kind
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a stirk.

But, if the lover's raptur'd hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly power,
You e'er should be a Stot!

Tho', when some kind, connubial dear,
Your but-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of horns.

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the nowte.

And when ye're numbered wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
"Here lies a famous bullock!"

["The origin of 'The Calf' is singular. The preacher was the Rev. James Steven, afterwards one of the Scottish Clergy in London, and ultimately minister of Kilwinning, in Ayrshire. It was his fate at this time to preach in the church at Mauchline, from the text which introduces the poem. From a memorandum by Burns himself, it would appear that there had been a wager with his friend Gavin Hamilton as to his producing a poem within a certain time, and that he gained it by producing *The Calf*. 'The Poet,' says Gilbert, 'had been with Mr. Hamilton in the morning (Sunday), who being confined with the gout, could not accompany him, but said jocularly to him, when he was going to church (in allusion to the injunction of some parents to their children), that he must be sure to bring him a note of the sermon at mid-day; this address to the Reverend Gentleman on his text was also produced. Burns, who appears to have been but little edified, remembering his promise to Mr. Hamilton, composed a rhyming satire on the minister from his own text, and repeated the same when he returned to dinner. The verses are clever, but certainly too severe. The Poet had no personal dislike to his victim—and desired his lampoon might be looked upon merely as a poetic sally. The appellation of 'The Calf' however, seems to have stuck to the preacher; —for in one of the letters to Burns from his younger brother, who died in London, the following passage occurs, dated 21st March, 1790:—"We were at Covent Garden chapel this forenoon to hear the 'Calf' preach: he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever."]

[Among the Poems of David Sillar are the following Verses, occasioned by a "Reply to Burns' Calf, by an unco Calf," with this motto:—

"A preachin' Ca'f—a Poet wearin' cloots,
Are surely ferlies 'mang the nat'ral brutes.

"WERE father Adam now to rise,
An' view us face to face,
I'm sure he'd scarce believe his eyes,
That he begat our race.

Tho' in his days mischief there was,
Men still were human creatures;
An' for his children they did pass,
Tho' changed i' their natures.

Balaam, 'twas strange, an ass he heard,
Foretellin' him o' danger;
But surely cloots upon a Bard,
An' preachin' calves, are stranger.

For Gude's sake, Sirs, your flytin' cease,
Misca' na ane anither;
Lest calves an' stirks, by keepin' peace
Disgrace you a' thegither.

But if ye winna cease to rair,
To rout, to girn, an' gape,
Ye're hafflins beasts; in naething mair,
Ye differ but the shape.

Gie satire vice; let men alone,
Tho' diff'rent in opinion;
Wha's right we canna always ken;
Man's mind is his dominion.

I'm sorry, Sirs, I hae't to say,
Our passions are sae strong,
As mak' us tine the beaten way,
An' rin sae aften wrong.

But, Sirs, mair sorry I am still,
When, without provocation,
A brother's character we'd kill,
Or bring him to vexation.

Then for the future let's be mute,
Reverin' those above us;
Wi' such as we, let's not dispute,
An' syne our frien's will love us.

Sae rout or no, just tak your will,
I tell you to your face,
The actions which befit a bull
Affront the human race."]

Epistle to James Smith.*

" Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much!——"—BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the sleest, paukie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
And ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair of shoon
Just gaun to see you;
And ev'ry ither pair that's done,
Mair ta'en I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin, nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
On her first plan;
And in her freaks, on every feature
She's wrote, 'The Man.'

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Some rhyme a neibor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
An' raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' countra wit.

This while my notion's ta'en a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black prent;
But still, the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries "Hoolie!
I rede you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

"There's ither poets much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors,
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters
Their unknown pages."

Then farewell hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

* [The individual, to whom this admirable epistle is addressed, was a merchant in Mauchline during the Poet's sojourn in the west: not succeeding there, he established a calico-printing manufactory at Avon, near Linlithgow; and while there we find Burns, in April, 1788, informing him of having married "a certain clean-limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussey" of his acquaintance, and desiring him to send one of his best printed shawls, as he had a wish that the first present he made her should be the work of one, whose friendship he counted on as a life-rent lease. He accompanied Burns to Poosie Nansie's, and saw the scene which is the subject of "The Jolly Beggars." This friendship was not to last; his lot, like that of the Poet, was chequered and hard. Smith failed in his speculations, left his native land, and found, what Burns narrowly escaped, a grave in the West Indies.—ED.]

I'll wander on, with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound and hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave care owre side!
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far 's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See, crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes hostin', hirplin', owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin',
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
An' social noise;
An' fareweel, dear deluding woman!
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant is thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim some fortune chase;
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin';
To right or left, eternal swervin',
They zig-zag on;
'Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin',
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Pow'rs!" and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honour!
And yill an' whiskey gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

"A title, Dempster merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent.
But gie me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows
As weel 's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces,
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But, gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattling squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes—
—Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quit my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

["Where can we find a more exhilarating enumeration of the enjoyments of youth, contrasted with their successive extinction as age advances, than in the epistle to James Smith?"
PROFESSOR WALKER.]

[The following happy and appropriate remarks are from the pen of "The Man of Feeling:"—"The power of genius is not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature. That intuitive glance with which a writer like Shakspeare discerns the character of men, with which he catches the many changing hues of life, forms a sort of problem in the science of mind, of which it is easier to see the truth than to assign the cause. Though I am far from meaning to compare our rustic bard to Shakspeare, yet whoever will read (this and) his (other) lighter and more humorous poems, his 'Twa Dogs'—his 'Dedication to Gavin Hamilton'—his Epistles to a 'Young Friend'—and 'To William Simpson,' will perceive with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this Heaven-taught Ploughman, from his humble and unlettered station, has looked upon men and manners."—HENRY M'KENZIE.]

The Vision.

DUAN FIRST.*

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,†
An' hunger'd maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin'-tree
The lee-lang day had tir'd me;
And when the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence,‡ right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and eye'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin';
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin'.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done naething,
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank an' clerkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, Blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

When, click! the string the sneck did draw:
And, jee! the door gaed to the wa';
An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin' bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glow'r'd as eerie 's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
And stepped ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows,
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
By that same token:
An' come to stop those reckless vows,
Wou'd soon been broken.

A 'hair-brain'd, sentimental trace'
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
'Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonnie Jean
Could only peer it,
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else came near it.

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* *Duan*, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his "Cath-Loda," vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation. R. B.

† [*Curling* is a wintry game peculiar to the southern counties of Scotland. When the ice is sufficiently strong on the lochs, a number of individuals, each provided with a large stone of the shape of an oblate spheroid, smoothed at the bottom, range themselves on two sides, and being furnished with handles, play against each other. The game resembles bowls, but is much more animated, and keenly enjoyed. It is well characterized by the Poet as a *roaring play*.]

‡ [The parlour of the farm-house of Mossgiel—the only apartment besides the kitchen. This room still exists in the state in which it was when the Poet described it as the scene of his vision of Coila. Though in every respect humble, and partly occupied by fixed beds, it does not appear uncomfortable. Every consideration, however, sinks beneath the one intense feeling that here, within these four walls, warmed at this little fire-place, and lighted by this little window [it has but one], lived one of the most extraordinary men; and here wrote some of the most celebrated poems of modern times!
CHAMBERS.]

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
A well known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough rear'd her head:*
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.†

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With features stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race‡ heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their Southron foes

His Country's Saviour,§ mark him well!
Bold Richardton's || heroic swell;
The chief on Sark¶ who glorious fell,
In high command;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a scepter'd Pictish shade**
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, portray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild romantic grove,††
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,‡‡
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,)
In musing mood,
An aged judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe
The learned sire and son I saw,§§
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw;
That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward||| I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye:
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot name on high
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heav'nly seeming fair;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail! my own inspired bard!
In me thy native Muse regard;
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

"Know, the great genius of this land
Has many a light, aërial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

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* [Ayr, whose charter dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.]

† [With this stanza the first Duan in the Kilmarnock edition of the Poet's works terminates. The subsequent stanzas were added in the Edinburgh edition.]

‡ The Wallaces. R. B.

§ Sir William Wallace. R. B.

|| Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence. R. B.

¶ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action. R. B.

** Coilus, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coils-field, where his burial-place is still shown. R B. [The spot pointed out by tradition as the burial-place of Coilus is a small mount marked by a few trees. It was opened May 29, 1837, when two sepulchral urns were found, attesting that tradition has been at least correct in describing the spot as a burial-place, though whose ashes these were, whether Coilus's, or whether such a personage as Coilus ever existed, it would be difficult to say.]

†† Barskimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice-Clerk (Sir Thomas Miller of Glenlee, afterwards President of the Court of Session). R. B.

‡‡ Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor, Stewart. R. B.

§§ [The Rev. Dr. Matthew Stewart, the celebrated mathematician, and his son, Mr. Dugald Stewart, the elegant expositor of the Scottish school of metaphysics, are here meant; their villa of Catrine being situated on the Ayr.]

||| Colonel Fullarton. R. B.

"They Scotia's race among them share;
Some fire the soldier on to dare:
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits, pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

"And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild, poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.*

"Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
His 'Minstrel lays;'
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The sceptic's bays.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic bard, the lab'ring hind,
The artisan;
All choose, as various they're inclin'd
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some, strongly, rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blythe o'er the hill.

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

"Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard:
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I—Coila my name,†
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells,‡ chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

"With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays,
Of other times.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the north his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantl'd earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' ador'd Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.§

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild, send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

"I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

* [In the first edition this stanza does not appear.]

† [The idea of this visionary being is acknowledged by Burns himself to have been taken from the *Scotia* of Mr. Alexander Ross, a Mearns poet, author of a pastoral of some merit, entitled *The Fortunate Shepherdess.*]

‡ [The Loudoun branch of the Campbells is here meant. Mossgiel and much of the neighbouring ground was then the property of the Earl of Loudoun.

§ [This and the four preceding stanzas display in a remarkable degree a high tone of feeling, a power and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and voice of the Poet. Of strains like the above, solemn and sublime, with that rapt and inspired melancholy in which the Poet lifts his eye 'above this visible diurnal sphere,' the poems entitled, '*Despondency*,' the '*Lament*,' '*Winter, a dirge*,' and the Invocation to '*Ruin*,' afford us no less striking examples."—Henry Mac Kenzie.]

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape-glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine:
And, trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor kings' regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine—
A rustic Bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve the dignity of man,
With soul erect;
And trust, the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou this,"—she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

[This is one of the most artificial Poems of Burns's composition. It is in many places, however, highly poetical, and the appreciation of his own character is peculiarly striking."
HOGG.]

["In the 'Vision' there are some vigorous and striking lines."—JEFFREY.]

[Much of the man is in all Burns's productions; in the history of this poem we may read some of the vicissitudes of his love and friendship. In the original manuscript, the verse which descends into particulars about Coila, claimed for her a leg as straight, and tight, and tapering as that of Jean Armour; the destruction of the marriage lines brought a blight on his affection—he dethroned her in his Kilmarnock edition, and raised up another in her stead:—

Down flowed her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen,
And such a leg! my Bess, I ween,
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
Nane else came near it.

Old affection triumphed by the time the Edinburgh edition was printed, and Jean was with pomp restored. Having extended his friendships after the first edition, he enlarged the robe of Coila, and emblazoned it with the history of the Wallaces who fought and were victorious at Stirling and Sark. He also admitted others of a later day to the honours of the mantle; and gave Coila more than she could well bear.—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

[Miss Rachael Dunlop, one of the daughters of Mrs. Dunlop, and who afterwards married Robert Glasgow, Esq., appears to have transferred the Coila of the Vision to canvas; for we find Burns, in February 1788, writing to that lady as follows:—

"I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila. I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet, of his Muse Scota, from which, by the bye, I took the idea of Coila; ('Tis a poem of Beattie's, in the Scottish dialect, which perhaps you have never seen):—

'Ye shake your head, but o' my fegs,
Ye've set auld Scota on her legs;
Lang had she lien wi' buffe and flegs,
Bombaz'd and dizzie;
Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs—
Waes me, poor hizzie!'

In the Sketch on New Year's day, he says,

'Coila's fair Rachel's care to-day.'"—ED.]

Halloween.*

THE following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but, for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.—BURNS.

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."†
GOLDSMITH.

* Halloween is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aerial people, the Fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary. R. B.

† VAR. Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.
GRAY'S ELEGY. MS.
[The Variations are from MS. in Burns's hand-writing.]

I.

Upon that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans* dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the cove,† to stray an' rove,
Amang the rocks an' streams
To sport that night.

II.

Amang the bonnie, winding banks
Where Doon rins, 'wimplin', clear,
Where Bruce‡ ance rul'd the martial ranks,
An' shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
An' haud their Halloween
Fu' blythe that night.

III.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin':
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whiles fast at night.

IV.

Then, first and foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks§ maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' graip an' wale,
For muckle anes an' straught anes,
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd through the bow-kail,
An' pou't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

V.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;
The vera wee-things, todlin', rin,
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the custoc's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've placed them
To lie that night.

VI.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn:‖
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kuittlin' in the fause-house¶
Wi' him that night.

VII.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoorded nits**
Are round an' round divided,
An' monie lads' an' lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

VIII.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 't was she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, an' this is me,
She says in to hersel':
He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
'Till, fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

IX.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie;
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, an' swoor, by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

X.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel' an' Rob in;

* Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.—R.B.

† A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.—R. B.

‡ The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert Bruce, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.—R. B.

§ The first ceremony of Halloween is pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune, and the taste of the custoc, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.—R. B.

‖ They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.—R. B.

¶ When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a fause-house.—R. B.

** Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and, accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.—R. B

In loving breeze they sweetly join,
'Till white in ase they're sobbin';
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stowlins, prie'd her bonnie mou',
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

XI.

But Merran sat behint their backs
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
An' slips out by hersel':
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins graipit for the bauks,
And in the blue-clue* throws then,
Right fear't that night.

XII.

An' aye she win't, an' aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin';
'Till something held within the pat,
Guid L—d! but she was quaukin'!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel',
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin'
To spier that night.

XIII.

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
I'll eat the apple† at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.

XIV.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
How daur you try sic sportin',
As seek the foul thief onie place,
For him to spae your fortune?
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' di'd deleeret
On sic a night.

XV.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,—
I mind't as weel 's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was nae past fyfteen;
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' stuff was unco green;
An' ay a rantin' kirn we gat,
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night.

XVI.

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow:
He's sin' gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed,‡ I mind it weel,
An' he made unco light o't;
But monie a day was by himsel',
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night."

XVII.

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense.
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try 't that night.

XVIII.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' haurls at his curpin;
An' every now an' then he says,
"Hemp-seed, I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, an' draw thee
As fast this night."

XIX.

He whistl'd up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
'Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

XX.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions:—Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand "Wha hauds?" i.e. who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse. —R. B.

† Take a candle, and go alone to a looking glass; eat an apple before it, and, some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.—R. B.

‡ Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, "Hemp-seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'Come after me, and shaw thee,' that is, show thyself; in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'Come after me, and harrow thee.'—R. B.

An' young an' auld came rinnin' out,
To hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
'Till, stop! she trotted thro' them a';
An' wha was it but grumphie
Asteer that night!

XXI.

Meg fain wad to the barn hae gaen,
To win three wechts o' naething;*
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An' twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

XXII.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca'
Syne bauldly in she enters:
A ratton rattled up the wa',
An' she cried, L—d, preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
An' pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

XXIII.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chanc'd the stack he faddom't thrice,†
Was timmer-propt for thrawin';
He taks a swirlie, auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome carlin;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
'Till skin in blypes cam haurlin'
Aff's nieves that night.

XXIV.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlen;
But, och! that night, amang the shaws,
She got a fearfu' settlin'!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Whare three lairds' lands met at a burn,‡
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

XXV.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whiles round a rocky scaur it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

XXVI.

Amang the brachens, on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool!
Near Lav'rock-height she jumpit;
But mist a fit, an' in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

XXVII.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three§ are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's-year did desire,
Because he gat the toom-dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire
In wrath that night.

XXVIII.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
An' unco' tales, an' funny jokes,
Their sports were cheap an' cheery;
Till butter'd so'ns,|| wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin'
Fu' blythe that night.

The ancient festival of Halloween is now sinking into disuse: in days of yore it was generally observed by the bulk of the Scottish population. Nor did it remain unsung till the days of Burns. A poem called "Halloween,"

* This charm must likewise be performed, unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.—R. B.

† Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a bean-stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.—R. B.

‡ You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake: and, some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.—R. B.

§ Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretels, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.—R. B.

|| Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween supper.—R. B.

from the muse of John Mayne, appeared in Ruddiman's Magazine for November, 1780;—some of the verses are striking and curious, and seem to have been known to the poet of Ayr-shire:—

"Of a' the festivals we hear
Frae Han'sel-Munday till new-year,
There's few in Scotland held mair dear
For mirth, I ween,
Or yet can boast o' better cheer,
Than Halloween.

"Plac'd at their head the guidwife sits,
And deals round apples, pears and nits,
Syne tells her guests how at sic bits
Where she has been,
Bogles hae gart fowk tyne their wits
On Halloween.

"Griev'd she recounts how wi' mischance
Puir poussie's forced a' night to prance
Wi' fairies, wha in thousands dance
Upon the green,
Or sail wi' witches owre to France
On Halloween.

"And when they've trimm'd ilk heaped plate,
And a' things are laid out o' gate,
To ken their matrimonial mate
The youngsters keen
Search a' the dark decrees o' fate
On Halloween.

"A' things prepar'd in order due,
Gosh guides! what fearfu' pranks ensue!
Some i' the kiln-pat thraw a clew,
At whilk bedeen
Their sweethearts by the far-end pu',
At Halloween.

"Ithers, wi' some uncanny gift,
In ane auld barn a riddle lift,
Where thrice, pretending corn to sift,
Wi' charms between,
Their jo appears, as white as drift,
At Halloween."

"The scene where the Halloween of Burns is laid is on the romantic coast of Ayr-shire: the cove of Colean gave shelter to Bruce and his intrepid followers when he planned the storming of Turnberry Castle.

"Of the fairies who, on sprightly coursers, rode on Cassilis-Downans, we have from Burns but a brief account;—the tale of Tamlane lets us more into the secret of their midnight doings—tradition adds a few particulars. They were not a mischievous race: they loved romantic hills and lonely valleys—they were fond of music and of children—their dress is invariably described as green—their heads bare, and their hair long and of a golden hue. The horses on which they rode were from fairy land, had small bells at their manes, long tails, and were of a cream-colour! The musical instruments of these spiritual people were corn-pipes and bog-reeds—but they could extract divine harmony out of an ordinary whistle. They loved bread baked of new meal: milk, warm from the cow, and honey dropt from the comb. They had the power of blessing or of cursing families and flocks, and never overlooked an ill deed nor forgot a favour. It is generally admitted that they left our land about seventy years ago: their mournings and moanings among the hills on the Hallowmass night of their departure—according to the assertion of an old shepherd—were melancholy to hear."
—Allan Cunningham.

"The Halloween is a most striking and picturesque description of local customs and scenery."—Hazlit.

"It exhibits a highly humourous and masterly description of some of the most remarkable superstitions of the Scottish peasantry, and the incidents are selected, and the characters disseminated, with great felicity."—Motherwell.

"The most of the ceremonies appropriate to Halloween, including all those of an adventurous character, are now disused. Meetings of young people still take place on that evening, both in country and town, but their frolics are usually limited to ducking for apples in tubs of water (a ceremony overlooked by Burns), the lottery of the dishes, and pulling cabbage-stalks. The other ceremonies are discountenanced as more superstitious than is desirable, and as somewhat dangerous. So lately as 1802, the following incident took place in Edinburgh, on All Hallow Eve:—A girl, named Isabel Carr, servant to Mr. Matthewson, type-founder, being determined to go through the rite of sowing hemp-seed, went for that purpose into her master's foundry, about ten o'clock at night, having a light in her hand, which she placed on one of the tables while she performed her incantations. She walked through the shop several times, pronouncing aloud the words used on such occasions—and so anxious was she to *see something*, as she termed it, that (having seen nothing) she gathered up the hempseed to sow it a second time. In the course of this second sowing, according to her own account, a tall meagre figure presented itself to her imagination! She shrieked aloud, and ran immediately into the house. After relating what she had seen, she went to bed, *placing the Bible under her head!* She rose next morning, and went through the labours of the day in apparent good health; but, in the evening, seemed somewhat timid. She went to bed without any symptoms of fear. Next morning, she was called, but did not answer. A daughter of Mr. Matthewson then rose, went to her, and found that she was very sick, and that she had been so during part of the night. Tea was ordered for her, but, before it could be prepared, she was seized with a stupor; the pulse became sunk, the breathing difficult, and the hands swollen and blackish. A medical gentleman was instantly called: he said it was an attack of apoplexy, which she could not survive more

than ten minutes; and in rather less than that time she expired. The surgeon was clearly of opinion that the impression made on her imagination by the fancied apparition was the cause of this fatal catastrophe." — ROBERT CHAMBERS.

Man was made to Mourn.

A DIRGE.

I.

WHEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wandered forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

II.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
Began the rev'rend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man.

III.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride:
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return,
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

IV.

"O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

V.

"Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then age and want—oh! ill-match'd pair!—
Show man was made to mourn.

VI.

"A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in ev'ry land
Are wretched and forlorn!
Thro' weary life this lesson learn—
That man was made to mourn.

VII.

"Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

VIII.

"See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

IX.

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's law design'd—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

X.

"Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

XI.

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend—
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!"

["Several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, 'Man was made to mourn,' was composed."—GILBERT BURNS.]

[An old Scottish ballad had some share in giving life and language to these emotions.—"I had an old grand-uncle," says the poet to Mrs. Dunlop, "with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years. The good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry,

while my mother would sing the simple old song of 'The Life and Age of Man.'" From the Poet's venerable mother, Mr. Cromek procured a copy of this composition; it commences thus:—

"Upon the sixteen hunderd year
Of God, and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, who bought us dear,
As writings testifie;
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah! man was made to moan!"

The pious minstrel then proceeds to compare the life of man to the seasons:—

"Then in comes March that noble arch,
With wholesome spring and air;
The child doth spring to years fifteen,
With visage fine and fair.
So do the flow'rs, with soft'ning show'rs,
Ay spring up as we see;
Yet ne'ertheless, remember this—
That one day we must die.

"Then brave April doth sweetly smile,
The flow'rs do fair appear,
The child is then become a man
To the age of twenty year;
If he be kind and well inclin'd
And brought up at a school,
Then men may know if he foreshow
A wise man or a fool.

"Then cometh May gallant and gay
When fragrant flow'rs do thrive,
The child is then become a man
Of age twenty and five:
And for his life doth seek a wife
His life and years to spend;
Christ from above sent peace and love
And grace unto the end.

"Then cometh June with pleasant tune,
When fields with flow'rs are clad,
And Phœbus bright is at his height—
All creatures then are glad;
Then he appears of thretty years,
With courage bold and stout;
His nature so makes him to go,
Of death he hath no doubt."]

["Whatever might be the casual idea that set the poet to work, it is but too evident that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly—and who shall say with absolute injustice?—the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly nor more loftily expressed than in some of these stanzas.

'See yonder poor, o'er-labour'd wight,' &c.

"The same feelings, strong, but triumphed over in the moment of inspiration, as it ought ever to have been in the plain exercise of such an understanding as his, may be read in every stanza of *his Epistle to Davie*."—LOCKHART.]

["Immediately below the old bridge of Barskimming, there is a small level, grassy plot, or holm, surrounded by lime and chesnut trees; this little holm is interestingly connected with the history of Burns, by the following circumstance, which has thus been related by the late James Andrew, miller, at Barskimming mill:—

"Close beside the end of the bridge, stands a neat small house, inhabited, at the time to which this anecdote relates, by an old man named Kemp, and his daughter. The old man, not originally possessed of the best of tempers, was rendered peevish and querulous by disease, and, in consequence of slight paralysis, generally supported himself on two sticks. His daughter Kate, however, a trim trig lass, was one of the leading belles of the district, and as such had attracted a share of the attentions of Robert Burns. One evening the poet had come from Mauchline to see Kate; but, on arriving at the house, he found the old man at the door in a more than usually peevish mood, and was informed by him that the cow was lost, and that Kate had gone in quest of her, but she had been so long away he was afraid she was lost too. The poet, leaving the old man, crossed the bridge, and at the farther end he met the miller of Barskimming mill, then a young man about his own age, whom he accosted thus: "Weel, miller, what are you doing here?" "Na, Robin," said the miller, "I s'ould put that question to you, for I am at hame and ye're no." "Why," said Robin, "I cam doun to see Kate Kemp." "I was just gaun the same gate," said the miller. "Then ye need gang nae further," said Burns, "for baith she and the cow's lost, and the auld man is perfectly wud at the want o' them. But, come, we'll tak a turn or two in the holm till we see if she cast up." They accordingly went into the holm, and, during the first two rounds they made, the poet chatted freely, but subsequently got more and more taciturn, and during the last two rounds spoke not a word. On reaching the stile that led from the place, he abruptly bade the miller good night, and walked rapidly towards Mauchline. Next time the miller and he met, he said, "Miller, I owe you an apology for my silence during our last walk together, and for leaving you so abruptly." "Oh!" said he, "Robin, there is no occasion, for I supposed some subject had occurred to you, and that you were thinking and perhaps composing something on it." "You were quite right, miller," said Burns, "and I will now read you what was chiefly the work of that evening." The composition he read was *Man was made to mourn*.

THE LAND OF BURNS.]

EPISTLE TO

John Goudie, Kilmarnock,

ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAYS.*

O GOUDIE! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black coats and rev'rend wigs,
Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
Girnin', looks back,
Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize you quick.

Poor gapin', glowrin' Superstition,
Waes me! she's in a sad condition;
Fie! bring Black-Jock, her state physician,
To see her w-t-r:
Alas! there's ground o' great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
But now she's got an unco ripple;
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,
Nigh unto death;
See, how she fetches at the thrapple,
An' gasps for breath!

Enthusiasm's past redemption,
Gaen in a gallopping consumption,
Not a' the quacks, wi' a' their gumption,
Will ever mend her.
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption
Death soon will end her.

'Tis you and Taylor† are the chief
Wha are to blame for this mischief,
But gin the Lord's ain folks gat leave,
A toom tar-barrel,
An' twa red peats wad send relief,
An' end the quarrel.

[The "Whigs," of whom the Essayist was the terror, were the Old Light portion of the Presbyterian kirk; men, ceremonious in their observances, austere in their conversation, and who accounted themselves Calvinists to the letter.—"These people inculcate that the greatest sinner is the greatest favourite of heaven—that a reformed bawd is more acceptable to the Almighty than a pure virgin who has hardly ever transgressed, even in thought—that the lost sheep alone will be saved, and that the ninety-and-nine out of the hundred will be left in the wilderness to perish without mercy—that the Saviour of the world loves the elect, not from any lovely qualities which they possess, for they are hateful in his sight—but 'he loves them, because he loves them.' Such are the sentiments which are breathed by those who are denominated high Calvinists, and from which the soul of a poet who loves mankind, and who has not studied the system in all its bearings, recoils with horror. The gloomy, forbidding representation which they give of the Supreme Being has a tendency to produce insanity, and lead to suicide."—REV. HAMILTON PAUL.]

* [This is another of those pieces which first appeared in the Glasgow collection published by Messrs. Brash and Reid, in 1801.]

Epistle to John Lapraik,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

April 1st, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' paitricks scraichin' loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin' seen,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin',
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin';
And there was muckle fun an' jokin',
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.‡

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier't,
Then a' that ken't him round declar'd
He had ingine,
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel',
Or witty catches:
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke-back,
A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

† Dr. Taylor, of Norwich.—R. B.

‡ [This song, entitled, "When I upon thy bosom lean," is given entire in Burns's Remarks on Scottish Song.]

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
Tho' rude an' rough:
Yet crooning to a body's sel',
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You, wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're may-be wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then, though I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear enough for me,
If I could get it!

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fu',
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true—
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel';
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends an' folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
May be some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

[There's naething like the honest nappy!
Whar'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
Or women sonsie, saft, an' sappy
'Tween morn and morn,
As them wha like to taste the drappy
In glass or horn!

I've seen me daez't upon a time,
I scarce cou'd wink, or see a styme;
Just ae half-mutchkin does me prime,
Aught less is little,
Then back I rattle on the rhyme,
As gleg's a whittle!]

Awa ye selfish war'ly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an' grace,
Ev'n love an' friendship, should give place
To catch-the-plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my long epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle;
Twa lines frae you would gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

[John Lapraik, to whom this and two other epistles are addressed, was a rustic follower of the muses. Burns elsewhere describes him as that "very worthy and facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram near Muirkirk, which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connection as security for some persons concerned in that villanous bubble, the Ayr Bank."]

[In this epistle TWO ADDITIONAL STANZAS are now for the first time restored. They appear in an original copy of the MS. in the Poet's own hand-writing, and were inserted by Cromek among the *Fragments* of Burns.—C.]

"The song which moved the Poet to write this epistle was composed by Lapraik, in one of his days of despondency, when his wife refused to be comforted. Lapraik is apparently the same name with Leprevick, honourable in the history of Scottish literature, having been borne by one of the most distinguished of our early printers. In 1364, David II. confirmed a charter of William de Cunningham, lord of Carrick, to James de Leprewick, of half the lands of Polkairne in King's Kyle (Wood's Peerage, I. 321), which shows that there were persons of that name at an early period connected with the district."—CHAMBERS.

"The epistle to John Lapraik was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says 'On Fasten e'en we had a rocking.' Rocking is a term derived from the primitive times, when our countrywomen employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house—hence the phrase of going a rocking, or with the rock. As the connexion the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock gave way to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these rockings, at our house, when they had twelve or fifteen young people with their rocks, that Lapraik's song beginning "When I upon thy bosom lean," was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first Epistle to Lapraik, and his second in reply to his answer."—GILBERT BURNS.

Formerly, in the lowlands of Scotland, wool was carded and spun for the benefit of the family to whom these friendly visitations were made. In some inland villages the social custom still prevails.

[The following is—

Lapraik's Reply to Burns's Epistle.

O FAR fam'd Rab! my silly muse,
That thou sae phrais'd lang-syne,
When she did scarce ken verse by prose,
Now dares to spread her wing.

Unconscious of the least desert,
Nor e'er expecting fame,
I sometimes did my friends divert,
Wi' jingling worthless rhyme.

When sitting lanely by myself,
Just unco griev'd and wae,
To think that fortune, fickle joe!
Had kick'd me o'er the brae!

And when I was amaist half-drown'd,
Wi' dolefu' grief and care,
I'd maybe rhyme a verse or twa,
To drive away despair;

Or when I met a chiel like you,
Sae gi'en to mirth an' fun,
Wha lik'd to speel Parnassus' hill,
An' drink at Helicon;

I'd aiblins catch a wee bit spark
O' his poetic fire,
An' rhyme awa like ane half-mad,
Until my muse did tire.

I lik'd the lasses unco weel,
Lang-syne when I was young,
Which sometimes kittl'd up my muse,
To write a kind love sang;

Yet still it ne'er ran in my head,
To trouble mankind with
My dull, insipid, thowless rhyme,
And stupid senseless stuff;

Till your kind muse, wi' friendly blast,
First touted up my fame,
And sounded loud, through a' the wast,
My lang forgotten name.

Quoth I, "Shall I, like to a sumph,
Sit douff and dowie here,
And suffer the ill-natur'd warld
To ca' Rab Burns a liar?

"He says that I can sing fu' weel,
An' through the warld has sent it--
Na; faith I'll rhyme a hearty blaud,
Though I should aye repent it."

Syne up I got, wi' unco glee,
And snatch'd my grey-goose quill,
An' cried, "Come here, my muse, fy, come,
An' rhyme wi' a' your skill."

The hizzy was right sweer to try't,
An' scarce wad be persuaded;
She said, I was turn'd auld an' stiff,
My youthfu' fire quite faded.

Quoth she, "Had ye began lang-syne,
When ye were brisk and young,
I doubt na but ye might hae past,
And sung a glorious sang.

"But now ye're clean gane out o' tune,
Your auld grey scaulp turn'd bare:
Mair meet that ye were turning douse,
An' trying to say your pray'r.

"The folks a' laughing at you, else,
Ye'll gar them laugh aye faster:
When ye gang out, they'll point and say,
There gangs the poetaster."

"Deil care," said I, "haud just your tongue,
Begin, and nae mair say,
I maun maintain my honour now,
Though I should seldom pray!

"I oft when in a merry tift,
Hae rhym'd for my diversion;
I'll now go try to rhyme for bread,
And let the warld be clashin'."

"Weel, weel," said she, "sin ye're sae bent,
Come, let us go begin then;
We'll try to do the best we can,
I'm sure we'll aye sae something."

Syne till't I gat, an' rhym'd away,
'Till I hae made a book o't,
An' though I should rue't a' my life,
I'll gie the warld a look o't.

I'm weel aware the greatest part
(I fain hope not the whole)
Will look upon't as senseless stuff,
An' me's a crazy fool.

Whether that it be nonsense a'
Or some o't not amiss,
And whether I've done right or wrang,
I leave the warld to guess.

But I should tell them, by the by,
Though maybe it is idle,
That feint a book scarce e'er I read.
Save ance or twice the bible.

An' what the learned folk ca' grammar,
I naething ken about it;
Although I b'lieve it be owre true,
Ane can do nought without it.

But maist my life has just been spent
(Which to my cost I feel)
In fechting sair wi' luckless brutes,
Till they kick'd up my heel.

Now fare-ye-weel, my guid frien' Rab,
May luck and health attend ye;
If I do weel, I'll bless the day
That e'er I came to ken ye;

But on the tither han', should folk
Me for my nonsense blazon,
Nae doubt I'll curse th' unlucky day
I listen'd to your phraisin'.

May that great name that ye hae got
Untainted aye remain;
And may the laurels on your head
Aye flourish fresh and green!

The Lord maintain your honour aye,
And then ye need na fear,
While I can write, or speak, or think,
I am your frien' sincere!]

Second Epistle to Lapraik.

April 21st, 1785.

While new ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, wi' weary legs,
Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten hours' bite,
My awkwart muse sair pleads and begs
I would na write.

The tapetless ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she, "Ye ken, we've been sae busy,
This month an' mair,
That, trouth, my head is grown right dizzy,
An' something sair"

Her dowff excuses pat me mad:
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,
Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
An' thank him kindly?"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
An' down gaed stumpie in the ink:
Quoth I, "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
An' if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp,
Tho' fortune use you hard an' sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland-harp
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how fortune waft and warp;
She's but a b-tch.

She's gien me monie a jirt an' fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the L—d, though I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,

I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg
As lang 's I dow!

Now comes the sax and twentieth simmer,
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a kist to lie and sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A baillie's name?

Or is't the paughty, feudal Thane,
Wi' ruffled sark an' glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel' nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

"O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heav'n, that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he!"

O mandate, glorious and divine!
The ragged followers o' the Nine,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless nievefu' of a soul
May in some future carcase howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, an' joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year!

[One of our greatest English poets used to recite, with commendations, most of the stanzas of this Second Epistle to Lapraik, pointing out, as he went, the all but inimitable ease and happiness of thought and language. He remarked, however, "that Burns was either fond of out-of-the-way sort of words, or that he made them occasionally in his fits of feeling and fancy. —For instance, he calls his muse

'The tapetless ramfeezl'd hizzie,'

and complains of being himself—

'Forjesket sair, wi' weary legs.'

Now, I sorely suspect that though 'forjesket' may pass, both 'tapetless' and 'ramfeezled' are new comers-in to the Scottish dialect." The reply was that *tapetless* indicated want of strength; *forjesket* was a word in common use, and meant worn-out with labour; and, with respect to *ramfeezled*, hear the words of the immortal author of 'The Task,' written in August, 1787.—"Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is bright, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbour of mine; but his uncouth dialect spoiled all; and, before he had read him through, he was quite *ramfeezled*."—COWPER.]

EPISTLE

To William Simpson,

OCHILTREE.

May, 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor Musie;
Tho' in sic phraisin' terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson, the writer chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,

Ye E'nbrugh gentry !
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry !)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
As whiles they're like to be my dead
(O sad disease !)
I kittle up my rustic reed ;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd stile ;
She lay like some unkenn'd-of isle
Beside New-Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon ;
Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,
Nae body sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line !
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing Auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bare the gree, as story tells,
Frae southron billies.

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood !
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,
Or glorious died.

O, sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry !

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree ;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray :
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day !

O Nature ! a' thy shews an' forms,
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms !
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night !

The muse, nae Poet ever fand her,
'Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander
An' no think lang ;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang !

The war'ly race may judge an' drive
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive—
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither !"
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither :
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal ;
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal !

While highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes ;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies,
While terra firma, on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In Robert Burns.

Postscript.

My memory's no worth a preen :
I had amaist forgotten clean
Ye bade me write you what they mean,
By this New Light,*
'Bout which our herds sae oft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans,
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, 'till her last roon,
Gaed past their viewing,
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This past for certain—undisputed ;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
'Till chiels gat up an' wad confute it,

* See note to "The Ordination," Stanza xiv.

An' ca'd it wrang ;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud an' lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk ;
For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk,
An' out o' sight,
An' backlins-comin,' to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd ;
The herds an' hirsels were alarm'd :
The rev'rend grey-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks ;
Frae words an' aiths to clours an' nicks
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt ;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' Auld Light caddies bure sic hands
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,
'Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But New Light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an'-stowe,
Till now amaist on every knowe,
Ye'll find ane plac'd ;
An' some their New-Light fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the Auld Light flocks are bleatin' ;
Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin' ;
Mysel', I've even seen them greetin'
Wi' girnin' spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns !
Some Auld Light herds in neibor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight,
An' stay ae mouth amang the moons
And see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them ;
An' when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
An' when the New Light billies see them,
I think they'll crouch !

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a "moonshine matter ;"
But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

[William Simpson was, in the days of Burns, schoolmaster of the parish of Ochiltree, afterwards of New Cumnock. He was a successful instructor of youth, and a poet of no mean order. Burns seems to have been partial to this class of men. He corresponded with David Sillar ; he wrote anxiously to John Murdoch ; William Nicol was long his companion, as well as correspondent ; to Allan Masterton he was partial ; he was intimate with the warm-hearted and enthusiastic James Gray. The present epistle shews what he thought of William Simpson ; indeed, with all he was social and friendly who had any claim to education or information, save the unfortunate Dr. Hornbook. The natural modesty of the Poet is as visible in this epistle as it is elsewhere : as a rhymer, he aspires not to rank with Allan Ramsay, or Hamilton of Gilbertfield—

"Or Fergusson, the writer chiel,
A deathless name."

But he desires to sing of the hills and dales, and heroes and beauties of Kyle, in his own rude country tongue. As Simpson is "a rhyme-composing brither," Burns speaks to him about his own aspirations ; and, as he is a candidate for a kirk, he adds a postscript—a rather mystical one—on the heresy of the New Light.

It is likely that honest "John Ochiltree" of the old song took his name from Simpson's parish : and it is more than likely that the inimitable Edie Ochiltree of Scott's romance was baptized after the hero of the song : elsewhere, and in the strains of Burns, the name occurs.

"The night it was a haly night,
The day had been a haly day :
Kilmarnock gleam'd wi' caunle light,
As hameward Girzie took her way.
A man o' sin, black be his fa' !
May he ne'er haly matin see—
Met gracious Girzie, wal-awa !
Amang the hills of Ochiltree."

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

THIRD EPISTLE

To John Lapraik.

Sept. 13*th*, 1785.

GUID speed an' furder to you, Johnny,
Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bonny ;
Now when ye're nickan down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs an' haggs
Like drivin' wrack ;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie too, an' skelpin' at it,
But bitter, daudin' showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi' muckle wark,
An' took my jocteleg* an' whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel' ye're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sel's;
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browster wives† an' whiskey stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship, Sir, I winna quat it,
An', if ye mak' objections at it,
Then han' in nieve some day we'll knot it,
An' witness take,
An' when wi' Usquabae we've wat it
It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
An' a' the vittel in the yard,
An' theekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin aqua-vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blythe an' witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
An' be as canty
As ye were nine year less than thretty,
Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks are cowpet ‡ wi' the blast,
An' now the sinn keeks in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest
An' quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe myself in haste
Your's, Rab the Ranter.

[This third and last epistle of Burns to Lapraik was omitted in the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions, and might have been lost had not the Bard of Muirkirk, cheered by the success of his brother of Mossgiel, given his poetic works to the world, and printed the hasty effort of his friend by way of illustration.

The name of Rab the Ranter at the end of this poem seems to have been adopted by the Poet after the Border Piper, so spiritedly introduced in the popular song of Maggie Lauder:—

"Maggie, quo' he, and by my bags,
I'm fidgin' fain to see thee;
Sit down by me, my bonnie burd,
In troth I winna steer thee:

"For I'm a piper to my trade,
My name is Rab the Ranter;
The lasses loup, as they were daft,
When I blaw up my chanter."]

* A Knife.
† Ale-house Wives.
‡ Tumbled over.

EPISTLE
TO
The Rev. John M'Math.

Sept. 17th, 1785.

While at the stook the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage rinnin' scow'r
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple, country bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowse h-ll upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, an hauf-mile graces,
Their raxin' conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gawn, § misca't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guid 's the priest
Wha sae abus't him.
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him?

See him, || the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed,
An' shall his fame an' honour bleed
By worthless skellums,
An' not a muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

O, Pope, had I thy satire's darts,
To gie the rascals their deserts,

§ Gavin Hamilton, Esq.
|| The poet has introduced the first two lines of this stanza into the Dedication of his Poems to Mr. Hamilton.

I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud,
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts,
To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,
But twenty times, I rather wou'd be
An atheist clean
Than under gospel colours hid be,
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what?—to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right, an' ruth,
To ruin straight.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who, in her rough imperfect line,
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't an' foul wi' mony a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those
Who boldly daur thy cause maintain
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite o' undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound,
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
(Which gies you honour)
Ev'n, sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd t'ye.

[The gentleman to whom this epistle is addressed was a worthy minister in the west of Scotland, who believed and preached the New Light: and it was written as an envelope to "Holy Willie's Prayer," of which it seems this reverend person had requested a copy. He was, at that time, enjoying the appointment of *assistant and successor* to the Rev. Peter Wodrow, minister of Tarbolton. He was an excellent preacher and a decided moderate. He enjoyed the friendship of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, and of Burns; but unhappily fell into low spirits, in consequence of his dependant situation, and either resigned his charge or was deposed. After being for some time tutor to a family in the Western Isles, this unfortunate man ultimately enlisted as a common soldier.—Ed.]

To a Mouse,*

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which maks thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker† in a thrave
's a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
'Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

---

* This is a beautiful little gem.—The Ettrick Shepherd.

† An ear of corn, occasionally.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

["The verses to the 'Mouse' and 'Mountain Daisy' were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough: I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise."—GILBERT BURNS.]

["The charm," says Jeffrey, "of the fine lines, written on turning up a mouse's nest with the plough, will be found to consist in the simple tenderness of the delineation." It has higher beauties, viz. the poet's regret that man's power has broken the social union of nature, and induces a "fellow-mortal" to fly in terror from his face, and the pathetic reference to his own condition—he shrinks from the contemplation of the present, and he dreads the future. The field on the farm of Mossgiel is still pointed out and visited in which Burns composed this grand moral poem.—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

["This beautiful poem is one of the most exquisite of the poet's productions. John Blane, who was farm-servant at Mossgiel at the time of its composition, still (1838) lives at Kilmarnock. He stated to me that he recollected the incident perfectly. Burns was holding the plough, with Blane for his driver, when the little creature was observed running off across the field. Blane, having the *pettle*, or plough-cleaning utensil, in his hand at the moment, was thoughtlessly running after it, to kill it, when Burns checked him, but not angrily, asking what ill the poor mouse had ever done him? The poet then seemed to his driver to grow very thoughtful, and, during the remainder of the afternoon, he spoke not. In the night time he awoke Blane, who slept with him, and, reading the poem which had in the meantime been composed, asked what he thought of the *mouse* now?"—CHAMBERS.]

Scotch Drink.

"Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief and care;
There let him bouse, an' deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An' minds his griefs no more."
SOLOMON'S PROVERB, xxxi. 6, 7

LET other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' dru'ken Bacchus,
An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch drink;
Whether thro' wimplin' worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
An' aits set up their awnie horn,
An' pease an' beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones,* the wale o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boilin' flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin'
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin';
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin',
Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At 's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy, siller weed,
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,

---

* Bannocks made of barley meal, which when baked are so flexible as to admit of being easily rolled together.

The poor man's wine,*
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin' on a new-year morning
In cog or bicker,
An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,†
An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see thee fizz an' freath
I' th' lugget caup!
Then Burnewin‡ comes on like death
At ev'ry chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block an' stud ie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin' weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin' cuifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.§

When neibors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley-bree
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drucken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her worst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel'!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whiskey punch
Wi' honest men.

O whiskey! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's gratefu' thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes——they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's —;

Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic grips, an' barkin' hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes's charter'd boast,‖
Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whiskey stells their prize!
Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' whiskey gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,

* Ale is here meant, a small portion of which is frequently mixed with the poor man's porridge.

† A small quantity of whiskey burnt in a spoon, and put into the ale.

‡ Burn-the-wind—the blacksmith—an appropriate title.

§ VAR. Wae worth them for't!
While healths gae round to him, tight,
Gies famous sport.— 1st EDIT.

‖ For services and expenses on the public account at the Revolution, Forbes of Culloden was empowered, by an act of the Scottish Parliament in 1690, to distil whiskey on his barony of Ferintosh in Cromarty-shire, free of duty. This inconsiderately-conferred privilege in time became the source of a great revenue to the family; and *Ferintosh* was at length recognised as something like a synonyme for whiskey, so much of it was there distilled. By the act relating to the Scotch distilleries in 1785, this privilege was declared to be abolished, the Lords of the Treasury being left to make such compensation to the existing Mr. Forbes as should be deemed just, or, should they fail to make a satisfactory arrangement, the case was to be decided by a jury before the Scottish Court of Exchequer. The Lords failing to satisfy Mr. Forbes, the case was accordingly tried by a jury, November 29, 1785, when it was shown by Mr. Henry Erskine, the plaintiff's counsel, that the privilege could be made to yield no less than seven thousand a-year to the family, though the actual annual gains from it, at an average of the last thirteen years, was but a little more than one thousand. He further showed that, while the right was an undoubted piece of property, which nothing could justly take away, the family had not failed to deserve it, as they had ever continued useful and loyal servants to the government; Mr. Duncan Forbes, the late Lord President, having, in particular, spent no less than £20,000 of his private fortune in suppressing the rebellion of 1745-6. The jury surprised the Lords of the Treasury by decreeing the sum of £21,580 for "loyal Forbes' chartered boast."—CHAMBERS.

'Tak' a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

["This poem was written in the spring of 1786, upon the model, as is sufficiently evident, of the *Caller Water* of Fergusson. The tone of this composition, and of the *Earnest Cry and Prayer*, was probably in a greater measure an emanation of Burns's fancy than of his genuine feelings; for, up to this period, he was not more accustomed to indulge in potations than nine of every ten of his acquaintance. Temperance societies had not then given bacchanalianism that dubious character, as a theme of verse, which it now has; and Burns, who liked to spend a social evening, would not, of course, see any impropriety in celebrating what, in its excesses, is now generally and justly held as the curse of our country."—CHAMBERS.]

This is one of our bard's early pieces, having been written on the 20th of March, 1786. "I here enclose you," says Burns to one of his correspondents, Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, "my Scotch drink, and may the —— follow with a blessing for your edification. I hope, some time, before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us, in a mutchkin stoup, which will be a great comfort and consolation to

Dear Sir, your humble servant,
R. B."

The Author's earnest Cry and Prayer

TO THE

SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"Dearest of distillation! last and best!
—— How art thou lost!——"
PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your honours' heart wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittin' on her ——
Low i' the dust,
An' scriechin' out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aqua-vitæ;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier youth,
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble:
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom?
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb!
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin' votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle;
An' d-mn'd excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin' a stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler, right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow a chuffie vintner,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire an' out o' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries fight,*
Or gab like Boswell,†
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose well.

God bless your honours, can ye see't,
The kind, auld, cantie carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it?

---

* [The poet here alludes to Colonel Hugh Montgomery of Coilsfield, representative of Ayr-shire in parliament, and subsequently twelfth Earl of Eglintoun. He had served as an officer in the American war. "Highland Mary" was at one time a servant in this gentleman's house.]

† [James Boswell of Auchinleck, the well-known biographer of Dr. Johnson. Boswell frequently spoke at the Ayr-shire county meetings.]

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period an' pause,
An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster,* a true blue Scot I'se warran';
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;†
An' that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;‡
An' ane, a chap that's d—mn'd auldfarran,
Dundas his name.§

Erskine,‖ a spunkie Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick,¶ an' Ilay;**
An' Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
An' monie ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

Thee, Sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
If bardies e'er are represented;
I ken if that your sword were wanted,
Ye'd lend your hand:
But when there's ought to say anent it,
Ye're at a stand.

Arouse, my boys; exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or, faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin' whittle,
Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost militia fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,)
Play'd her that pliskie!
A' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her whiskey.

An' L—d, if ance they pit her till 't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk an' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' th' first she meets!

For G-d's sake, sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle House repair,
Wi' instant speed,
An strive, wi' a' your wit and lear,
To get remead.

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But gie him 't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cowe the caddie!
An send him to his dicing box
An sportin' lady.

Tell you guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's††
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,‡‡
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's,§§
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,‖‖
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch
The coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She's just a devil wi' a rung;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak' their part,
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

* [George Dempster of Dunnichen, in the county of Forfar, an eminent Scottish Whig representative in the time of Fox and Pitt. He commenced his parliamentary career in 1762, and closed it in 1790, after having sat in five successive parliaments. Every patriotic and liberal scheme had the support of this excellent man, who died in 1818, at the age of 82.]

† [Sir Adam Ferguson of Kilkerran, Bart. He had several times represented Ayr-shire, but at this period was member for the city of Edinburgh.]

‡ [The Marquis of Graham, eldest son of the Duke of Montrose. He afterwards became the third Duke of Montrose, and died in 1836.]

§ [The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Treasurer of the Navy, and M.P. for Edinburgh-shire, afterwards Viscount Melville.]

‖ [Thomas Erskine, afterwards Lord Erskine.]

¶ [Lord Frederick Campbell, second brother of the Duke of Argyle, Lord Register of Scotland, and M.P. for the county of Argyle in four successive parliaments.]

** [Ilay Campbell, Lord Advocate for Scotland, then representative in parliament of the Glasgow group of burghs. He was afterwards president of the Court of Session, and died in 1823, at an advanced age.]

†† [Mr. Pitt's father, the Earl of Chatham, was the second son of Robert Pitt of Boconnock, in the county of Cornwall.]

‡‡ [Scones made from a mixture of oats, peas, or beans, with wheat or barley, ground fine, and denominated *mashlum*, are in general use in Scotland, and form a wholesome and palatable food.]

§§ [A worthy old hostess of the author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studied politics over a glass of guid auld Scotch drink.—R. B.]

["Nance Tinnock is long deceased, and no one has caught up her mantle. She is described as having been a true *ale-wife*, in the proverbial sense of the word—close, discreet, civil, and no tale-teller. When any neighbouring wife came, asking if *her John* was here, 'Oh no,' Nance would reply, shaking money in her pocket as she spoke, 'he's no here,' implying to the querist that the husband was not in the house, while she meant to herself that he was not among her half-pence—thus keeping the word of promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope. Her house was one of two stories, and had a front towards the street, by which Burns must have entered Mauchline from Mossgiel. The date over the door is 1744. It is remembered, however, that Nanse never could understand how the poet should have talked of enjoying himself in her house 'nine times a-week.' 'The *lad*,' she said, 'hardly ever drank three half-mutchkins under her roof in his life.' Nanse, probably, had never heard of the *poetical* license. In truth, Nanse's hostelry was not the only one in Mauchline which Burns resorted to: a rather better-looking house, at the opening of the Cowgate, kept by a person named John Dove, and then and still bearing the arms of Sir John Whiteford of Ballochmyle, was also a haunt of the poet, having this high recommendation, that its back windows surveyed those of the house in which his 'Jean' resided. The reader will find in its proper place a droll epitaph on John Dove, in which the honest landlord's religion is made out to be a mere comparative appreciation of his various liquors."—CHAMBERS.

Her portrait was taken by Brooks in 1799, and has been engraved. The original drawing is in the possession of Mr. Pickering, of Chancery Lane, London.]

‖‖ The young Chancellor of the Exchequer had gained some credit by a measure introduced in 1784, for preventing smuggling of tea by reducing the duty, the revenue being compensated by a tax on windows.

An' now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a minister grow dorty,
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your honours a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes,
That haunt St. Jamie's!
Your humble poet sings and prays
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blythe and frisky,
She eyes her free-born, martial boys,
Tak' aff their whiskey.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burthen on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' pouther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throu'ther,
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal George's will,
An' there's the foe;
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes—wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy han' a welcome gies him;
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him;
In faint huzzas!

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
In clime an' season;
But tell me whiskey's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
Tho' whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam;
Freedom and whiskey gang thegither!—
Tak aff your dram!

"This poem was written," says Burns, "before the act anent the Scottish Distilleries of Session 1786, for which Scotland and the author return their most grateful thanks."

["Towards the close of the year 1785, loud complaints were made by the Scottish distillers respecting the vexatious and oppressive manner in which the excise laws were enforced at their establishments—such rigour, they said, being exercised at the instigation of the London distillers, who looked with jealousy on the success of their northern brethren. So great was the severity of the excise that many distillers were obliged to abandon the trade, and the price of barley was beginning to be affected. Illicit distillation was also found to be alarmingly on the increase. In consequence of the earnest remonstrances of the distillers, backed by the county gentlemen, an act was passed in the session of 1786 (alluded to by the author), whereby the duties on low wines, spirits, &c., were discontinued, and an annual tax imposed on stills, according to their capacity. This act gave general satisfaction. It was during the general outcry against fiscal oppression that the poem was composed."—Chambers.

"Burns' postscripts are oftentimes, like those of a lady's letter, the more important part of the piece to which they are attached. In this case it is eminently so: few passages have been more frequently cited than the fourth and fifth stanzas, the last of which is quite pictorial, while there are many who must have heard the sentiment, "Freedom and Whiskey gang thegither," urged as an adage for the further prolongation of convivial enjoyments. Though we are no enemies to boon companionship, still with Hector Macneil we must say,

'Robin Burns, in monie a ditty,
Loudly sings in whiskey's praise:
Sweet his king!—the mair's the pity
E'er on it he waur'd sic lays.

O' a' the ills poor Caledonia
E'er yet pree'd, or e'er will taste,
Brew'd in hell's black Pandemonia,
Whiskey's ills will skaith her maist.' "

Motherwell.

Address to the Unco Guid,

OR THE

Rigidly Righteous.

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither;
The rigid righteous is a fool,
The rigid wise anither;
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
Solomon.—Eccles. ch. vii. ver. 16.

I.

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibours' fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

II.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What mak's the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

IV.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

V.

See social life and glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
'Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
D-mnation of expences!

VI.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

VII.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *Why* they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far, perhaps, they rue it.

VIII.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

In this beautiful poem, the author has interwoven the following reflections, which are to be found in the early prose memoranda given by him to Mr. Riddell, March, 1784:—"I have often experienced, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him, tho' very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called *wicked*. Let any one of the strictest character for regularity of conduct, amongst us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but from want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation; and how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye."

["To unmask hypocrisy was a favourite pursuit of the muse of Burns. Not content with exposing others, the Poet bared his own bosom, and displayed his errors to the world, with a confidence which has been ill-requited. His confessions of frailty have supplied texts to preach from against the follies of poets—men of whom one who had a right to speak, has said,—

"Naked feeling, and in aching pride,
They bear the unbroken blast on every side."

This has been pushed so far, in the story of Burns, that a clergyman intimated from the pulpit that Heaven, at the Poet's funeral, manifested its wrath in "thunder, lightning, and in rain." Instead of this, however, July sent one of her brightest and balmiest days."—

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

"Burns has written more from his own heart and his own feelings than any other poet, of which this poem is an instance. With the secret fountains of passion in the human soul he was well acquainted, and deeply versed in their mysteries. The last two verses are above all praise."—THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.]

Tam Samson's Elegy.*

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—Pope.

Has auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
Or great M'Kinlay† thrawn his heel!
Or Robinson‡ again grown weel,
To preach an' read?
"Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,
Tam Samson's dead!

Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sob, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, and wean,
In mourning weed;
To death, she's dearly paid the kane—
Tam Samson's dead!

The brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in waefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gi'en the lodge an unco devel—
Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire up like a rock;
When to the lochs the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock?—
Tam Samson's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore;
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need;
But now he lags on death's hog-score,—
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts be-dropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel kenn'd for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in death's fish-creel we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks, crously craw;
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa',—
Tam Samson's dead!

That waefu' morn be ever mourn'd
Saw him in shootin' graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed;
But, och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns cam' down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin', clatters,
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
An' aye the tither shot he thumpit,
Till coward death behind him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
"L—d, five!" he cry'd, an' owre did stagger—
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
Yon auld grey stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch an' breed;
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his mem'ry crave
O' pouther an' lead,
'Till Echo answer, frae her cave,
Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be!
Is th' wish o' mony mae than me;
He had twa fauts, or may be three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social, honest man want we:
Tam Samson's dead!

EPITAPH.

Tam Samson's weel worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, an' canter like a filly,
Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie,§
Tell ev'ry social, honest billie
To cease his grievin',
For yet, unskaith'd by death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's livin'.

* When this worthy old sportsman went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields;" and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph. R. B.

† A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. *Vide* the Ordination, stanza II. R. B.

‡ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him, see also the Ordination, stanza IX. R. B.

§ Killie is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for the name of a certain town in the west [Kilmarnock]. R. B.

[Thomas Samson was a respectable old nursery and seedsman of Kilmarnock, greatly addicted to sporting, and one of the Poet's earliest friends.

"No poet ever emblazoned fact with fiction more happily than Burns: the hero of this poem was a country sportsman, who loved curling on the ice in winter, and shooting on the moors in the season. When no longer able to march over hill and hag in quest of

'Paitricks, teals, moor-pouts, and plivers,'

he loved to lie on the lang-settle, and listen to the deeds of others on field and flood; and when a good tale was told, he would cry 'Hech man! three at a shot; that was famous!' Some one having informed Tam, in his old age, that Burns had written a poem—'a gay queer ane'—concerning him, he sent for the Bard, and, in something like wrath, requested to hear it: he smiled grimly at the relation of his exploits, and then cried out, 'I'm no dead yet, Robin—I'm worth ten dead fowk: wherefore should ye say that I am dead?' Burns took the hint, retired to the window for a minute or so, and, coming back, recited the 'Per Contra,'

'Go, fame, an' canter like a filly,'—

with which Tam was so delighted that he rose unconsciously, rubbed his hands, and exclaimed, 'That'll do—ha! ha!—that'll do!' He survived the Poet, and the epitaph is inscribed on his grave-stone in the churchyard of Kilmarnock."—CUNNINGHAM.]

THE LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A

Friend's Amour.

"Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself!
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe."
HOME.

I.

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

II.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly feign'd poetic pains
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft-attested Pow'rs above;
The promis'd father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown!
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and her's alone!
And must I think it?—is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

V.

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie through rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn, that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse,
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
  Scenes never, never, to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
  Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
  Life's weary vale I'll wander through;
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
  A faithless woman's broken vow.

After mentioning the appearance of 'Holy Willie's Prayer,' which alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers, Burns states, "unluckily for me my wanderings led me on another side, within point blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, 'The Lament.' This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the charter, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy Night is gathering fast*, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition."

"It is scarcely necessary to mention that 'The Lament' was composed on that unfortunate passage in his matrimonial history which I have mentioned in my letter to Mrs. Dunlop—[alluding to his connexion with Jean Armour.]—After the first distraction of his feelings had subsided, that connexion *could no longer be concealed*. Robert durst not engage with a family in his poor unsettled state, but was anxious to shield his partner, by every means in his power, from the consequences of their imprudence. It was agreed, therefore, between them, that they should make a legal acknowledgment of an irregular and private marriage; that he should go to Jamaica to *push his fortune;* and that she should remain with her father till it might please Providence to put the means of supporting a family in his power."—Gilbert Burns.

"The charm of that composition, beginning, 'O thou pale orb!' is that it speaks the language of truth and of nature."—
A. F. Tytler.

Despondency.

AN ODE.

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
  I set me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
  To wretches such as I!
Dim, backward, as I cast my view,
  What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro'
  Too justly I may fear!
    Still caring, despairing,
      Must be my bitter doom;
    My woes here shall close ne'er,
      But with the closing tomb!

II.

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
  No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wished end's deny'd,
Yet while the busy means are ply'd,
  They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
  Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night
  And joyless morn the same;
    You, bustling, and justling,
      Forget each grief and pain;
    I, listless, yet restless,
      Find every prospect vain.

III.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
  Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
  Beside his chrystal well!
Or, haply, to his evening thought,
  By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
  A faint collected dream;
    While praising, and raising
      His thoughts to heav'n on high,
    As, wand'ring, meand'ring,
      He views the solemn sky.

IV.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
  Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
  With self-respecting art:
But, ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys
  Which I too keenly taste,

The solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here must cry here
At perfidy ingrate!

v.

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining age!

"I think," observes Burns, "it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, and loves, an embodied form in verse, which to me is ever immediate ease." [Fuseli, the painter, seeing his wife in a passion one day, said, "Swear, my love, swear heartily; you know not how much it will ease you!"]

The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil;
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor."—GRAY.

I.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end:
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there,
I ween!

II.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And, weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.†

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher thro'
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

IV.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun':
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V.

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd, fleet;
Each tells the unco's that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;—
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn, and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel an' assisting might:
They never sought in vain, that sought the Lord aright!"

VII.

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.

---

* "'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is a noble and pathetic picture of human manners, mingled with a fine religious awe. It comes over the mind like a slow and solemn strain of music. The soul of the poet aspires from this scene of low-thought care, and reposes in trembling hope on the bosom of its Father and its God."—HAZLITT.

† [The opening verse of "Fergusson's Farmer's Ingle" bears a considerable resemblance to this second stanza of Burns—

Whan gloamin grey out-ower the welkin keeks,
Whan Bawtie ca's the owsen to the byre,
Whan Thrasher John, sair dung, his barn-door steeks,
Whan lusty lasses at the dighting tire:
What bangs fu' leal the e'ening's coming cauld,
And gars snaw-tappit winter freeze in vain;
Gars dowie mortals look baith blythe and bauld,
Nor fley'd wi' a' the puirtith o' the plain;
Begin, my Muse, and chant in hamely strain.]

The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek,
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

IX.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures!—bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If Heaven a draught of heav'nly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

X.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

XI.

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome parritch, chief of Scotia's food:
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride;*
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship GOD!" he says, with solemn air.

XIII.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heav'n-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ear no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

XIV.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny:
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How HE, who bore in Heav'n the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heav'n's command.

XVI.

Then kneeling down, to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING!
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'†
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

* The following fine lines on the same subject are by Mrs. Hemans:

TO A FAMILY BIBLE.

What household thoughts around thee, as their shrine,
Cling reverently!—Of anxious looks beguil'd,
My mother's eyes upon thy page divine
Were daily bent; her accents, gravely mild,
Breathed out thy lore;—whilst I, a dreamy child,
On breeze-like fancies wandered oft away,
To some lone tuft of gleaming spring-flowers wild,
Some fresh-discovered nook for woodland play,
Some secret nest: yet would the solemn word,
At times, with kindlings of young wonder heard,
Fall on my wakened spirit, there to be
A seed not lost; for which, in darker years,
O Book of Heaven! I pour, with grateful tears,
Heart-blessings on the holy dead and thee.

† Pope's Windsor Forest. R. B.

XVII.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Pow'r, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole:
But, haply, in some cottage far apart, [soul;
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the
And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request
That He, who stills the rav'n's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine
preside.

XIX.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind.
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX.

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil! [sent!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

XXI.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd through Wallace's undaunted heart:
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament & guard!

[Of the origin of this truly sacred drama, Gilbert Burns gives the following distinct account.—"Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God!' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author, the world is indebted for 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' When Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons—those precious breathing times to the labouring part of the community—and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard any thing by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstacy through my soul. The Cotter, in the 'Saturday Night,' is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotion, and exhortations; yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us were ever 'at service out among the farmers round.' Instead of our depositing our 'sair-won penny-fee' with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home, thereby having an opportunity of watching the progress of our young minds, and forming in them early habits of piety and virtue; and from this motive alone did he engage in farming, the source of all his difficulties and distresses."

The remark of an old inmate of Dunlop-house, on this poem, may amuse some readers.—When Burns was first invited to dine there, a westlin dame, who acted as housekeeper, appeared to doubt the propriety of her mistress entertaining a mere ploughman who made rhymes, as if he were a gentleman of old descent. By way of convincing Mrs. M'Guistan, (that was the good woman's name) of the Bard's right to such distinction, Mrs. Dunlop gave her "The Cotter's Saturday Night" to read. This was soon done; she returned the volume with a strong shaking of the head, saying, "Nae doubt gentlemen and ladies think mickle o' this, but for me its naething but what I saw i' my father's house every day, and I dinna see how he could hae tauld it in ony other way."

"'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is tender and moral, solemn and devotional, and rises at length into a strain of grandeur and sublimity which modern poetry has not surpassed. The noble sentiments of patriotism, with which it concludes, correspond with the rest of the poem. In no age or country have the pastoral muses breathed such elevated accents, if the Messiah of Pope be excepted, which is indeed a pastoral in form only. It is to be regretted that Burns

did not employ his genius on other subjects of the same nature, which the manners and customs of the Scottish peasantry would have amply supplied. Such poetry is not to be estimated by the degree of pleasure which it bestows: it sinks deeply into the heart, and is calculated, far beyond any other human means, for giving permanence to the scenes and the characters it so exquisitely describes."—CURRIE.

"The most exquisite of his series of poems is 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' The characters and incidents, which the poet here describes in so interesting a manner, are such as his father's cottage presented to his observation: they are such as may everywhere be found among the virtuous and intelligent peasantry of Scotland. 'I recollect once he told me,' says Professor Stewart, 'when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.' With such impressions as these upon his mind, he has succeeded in delineating a charming picture of rural innocence and felicity. The incidents are well-selected, the characters skilfully distinguished, and the whole composition is remarkable for the propriety and sensibility which it displays."—DR. IRVING.

"Burns is almost equally distinguished for his tenderness and humour; for a faculty of combining them both in the same subject, not entirely without parallel in the older poets, but altogether singular among modern writers. The passages of pure humour are entirely Scottish, and untranslateable. They consist in the most picturesque representations of life and manners, enlivened and even exalted by traits of excellent sagacity and unexpected reflection. His tenderness is of two sorts; that which is combined with circumstances and characters of humble and ludicrous simplicity; and that which is produced by gloomy and distressful impressions acting on a mind of keen sensibility. The passages which belong to the former description are the most exquisite and original, and indicate the greatest and most amiable turn of genius; both as being accompanied by fine and feeling pictures of humble life, and as requiring that delicacy as well as justness of conception, by which alone the fastidiousness of an ordinary reader can be reconciled to such representations. The exquisite description of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' affords, perhaps, the finest example of this sort of pathetic. Its whole beauty cannot, indeed, be discerned, but by those whom experience has enabled to judge of the admirable fidelity and beauty of the picture."—JEFFREY.

The beautiful picture of family devotion drawn by the Poet is now almost extinct: the farmer no longer presides among his menials, like a father with his family, and the sound of psalm and prayer is but seldom heard among the farm onsteads and cottages. Washington Irving perceived a similar falling off in the south—"It was once," says he, "almost universally the case at the seats of the nobility and gentry of England, and it is much to be regretted that the custom has fallen into neglect; for the dullest observer must be sensible of the order and serenity prevalent in those households where the occasional exercise of a beautiful form of worship in the morning gives, as it were, the key-note to every temper for the day, and attunes every spirit to harmony."]

The First Psalm.

THE man, in life wherever plac'd,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees,
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

In his version of the First Psalm, Burns did not greatly improve on the original. In simplicity the sacred minstrel of the days of the Stuarts surpasses the Poet of Kyle; but let the reader judge for himself:—

"That man hath perfect blessedness
Who walketh not astray,
In counsel of ungodly men,
Nor stands in sinner's way,
Nor sitteth in the scorner's chair;
But placeth his delight
Upon God's law, and meditates
On his law day and night.

"He shall be like a tree that grows
Near planted by a river,
Which in his season yields his fruit,
And his leaf fadeth never;
And all he doth shall prosper well.
The wicked are not so;
But like they are unto the chaff,
Which wind drives to and fro.

"In judgment therefore shall not stand
Such as ungodly are;
Nor in th' assembly of the just
Shall wicked men appear.
For why? the way of godly men
Unto the Lord is known:
Whereas the way of wicked men
Shall quite be overthrown."

The First Six Verses
OF THE
Ninetieth Psalm.

O Thou, the first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this pond'rous globe itself,
Arose at thy command;

That Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought;
Again Thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

In this instance Burns was happier. We subjoin the original verses of the Scottish version.—

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place
In generations all.
Before thou ever hadst brought forth
The mountains great or small;
Ere ever thou hadst form'd the earth,
And all the world abroad;
Ev'n thou from everlasting art
To everlasting God.

"Thou dost unto destruction
Man that is mortal turn;
And unto them thou say'st, Again
Ye sons of men return.

Because a thousand years appear
No more before thy sight
Than yesterday, when it is past,
Or than a watch by night.

"As with an overflowing flood
Thou carry'st them away:
They like asleep are, like the grass
That grows at morn are they.
At morn it flourishes and grows,
Cut down at ev'n doth fade;
For by thine anger we're consum'd
Thy wrath makes us afraid."

The ninetieth psalm—the Scottish version—was a great favourite in the household of the Poet's father. To devotional verse, therefore, the mind of Burns was directed early; but there were other impulses.—"The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in," he writes to Dr. Moore, "was the Vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning,—

"How are thy servants blest, O Lord!"

I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear:—

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung,
High on the broken wave."

I met with these lines in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books."

Ode to Ruin.

I.

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

II.

And thou grim pow'r, by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's prayer!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mould'ring in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclasped, and grasped
Within thy cold embrace!

[It appears from internal evidence that the above lines were composed in 1786, when "Hungry Ruin had him in the wind." The "dart" that

"——— cut my dearest tie
And quivers in my heart"

is evidently an allusion to his separation from his bonnie Jean. Burns seems to have glanced into futurity with a prophetic eye: images of misery and woe darkened the distant vista: and when he looked back on his career he saw little to console him.—"I have been, this morning," he observes, "taking a peep through, as Young finely says, 'The dark postern of time long elapsed.' 'Twas a rueful prospect! What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportion, in some parts! What unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies and said:—'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." I rose, eased and strengthened.' In various poems Burns has exhibited the picture of a mind under the deep impressions of real sorrow. 'The Lament,' the 'Ode to Ruin,' 'Despondency,' and 'Winter, a Dirge,' are of this character. Burns often indulged in those melancholy views of the nature and condition of man, which are so congenial to the temperament of sensibility. —CURRIE.]

A Prayer

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU Great Being! what thou art
Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But, if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine!

The following melancholy note appears in the original memoranda of the Poet:—There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broken by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed this prayer.

A Prayer

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast form'd me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good! for such Thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

Stanzas,

ON THE SAME OCCASION.*

WHY am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms:
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way:
Again in folly's path might go astray;†
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for Heav'nly mercy pray,
Who act so counter Heav'nly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,‡

* The variations are taken from the original M.S. in the Poet's own hand-writing.

† VAR.—Again by passion would be led astray. M.S.

‡ If one so black with crimes dare call on thee. M.S.

Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea:
With that controuling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong *furious passions to confine
For all unfit I feel my pow'rs to be,†
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line;
O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

[This "Prayer" and the "Stanzas" were composed when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm. The stanzas are misgivings in the hour of despondency and prospect of death. The grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that Being to whom we owe life with every enjoyment that renders life delightful.—BURNS.]

STANZAS

To a Mountain Daisy,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL 1786.

I.

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

II.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' speckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet,
The purpling east.‡

III.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble, birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

IV.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

V.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the '*share*' uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

VI.

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

VII.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

VIII.

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

IX.

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till, crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

[The "Mountain Daisy" was composed, as the Poet has related, at the plough: the field where he crushed the "Wee modest crimson-tipped flower" lies next to that in which he turned up the nest of the Mouse, and both are on the farm of Mossgiel, and still shown to anxious inquirers by the neighbouring peasantry.

"Mossgiel is about a mile from Mauchline. It is a very plain farm-steading of the kind described in Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd':—

> 'A snug thack house, before the door a green;
> Hens on the midden, ducks in dubs are seen;
> On this side stands a barn, on that a byre,
> A peat-stack joins, and forms a rural square;'

except that the buildings are not thatched.

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* *Rapid.* M.S. † My *native* powers be. M.S.

‡ I have seldom met with an image more truly pastoral than that of the lark in the second stanza. Such strokes as these mark the pencil of the poet, which delineates nature with the precision of intimacy, yet with the delicate colouring of beauty and of taste.—HENRY M'KENZIE.

Being situated at the height of the country, between the vales of the Ayr and the Irvine, it has a peculiarly bleak and exposed appearance, which is but imperfectly obviated by a very tall hedge and some well-grown trees which gather around it, and beneath one of which, it is said, the Poet loved to recline. The domestic accommodations consist of little more than a but and a ben—that is, a kitchen and a small room. The latter, though in every respect most humble, and partly occupied by fixed beds, does not appear uncomfortable. Every consideration, however, in the mind of the visiter sinks beneath the one intense feeling that here—within these four walls—warmed at this little fireplace, and lighted by this little window—lived one of the most extraordinary men that ever breathed; and here wrote some of the most celebrated poems of modern times. The house is in every respect exactly in the same condition as when the Poet lived in it."—CHAMBERS.

"'The Address to a Mountain Daisy,' is a Poem of the same nature with the Address 'To a Mouse.' To extract out of incidents so common and seemingly so trivial as these, so fine a train of sentiment and imagery, is the surest proof, as well as the most brilliant triumph, of original genius."—CURRIE.

Epistle to a Young Friend.

May, 1786.

I.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae other end
Than just a kind memento;
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

II.

Ye'll try the world fu' soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
Ev'n when your end's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

III.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked:
But, och! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted!

IV.

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart;
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

V.

Aye free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel'
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel', as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

VI.

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

VII.

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

VIII.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX.

The great Creator to revere
Must sure become the creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An Atheist laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

X.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n
Is sure a noble anchor!

XI.

Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!

May prudence, fortitude, and truth
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser:
And may you better reck the rede
Than ever did th' adviser!

"Burns' Poetical Epistles to his friends are admirable."—HAZLIT.

"This is a beautiful and masterly Poem."—HOGG.

"It displays much shrewdness, an intimate acquaintance with human nature, and great kind-heartedness. When Burns employed his mind in giving rules for moral and prudential conduct, no man was a sounder philosopher."—MOTHERWELL.

"This Epistle was addressed to one every way worthy of such a strain—Andrew Aiken, son of Robert Aiken, writer, in Ayr, to whom 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' is inscribed. Young Aiken entered into the service of his country, and rose to distinction and affluence. He obtained some notice, too, in London, in 1832, at the dinner celebrating the birth-day of the Ayr-shire Ploughman, and that of the Ettrick Shepherd; nature having, it seems, out of a wondrous love for the 25th of January, produced both Poets on that day of the year—and produced them both in storms: the hail and the whirlwind were abroad when Burns was born; and Ettrick rose in flood, as Ettrick never rose before, when Hogg appeared!"—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

To a Louse,

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET, AT CHURCH.

HA! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie!
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho' faith, I fear, ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd, by saunt an' sinner,
How dare ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils, snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
'Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and grey as onie grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi!* fie!
How daur ye do't?

O, Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin'!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin'!

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n devotion!

[" Homelier subjects were sometimes chosen by the Muse of Burns than his more stately friends desired. 'The Louse' is one of them. Some of his lady patronesses expostulated, and some critics frowned: it was all to no purpose. When once a man of genius begins to sacrifice his own judgment to the taste of others, who knows where he may halt? Almost all the themes on which Burns sung are of a humble kind: a Mouse, a Daisy, an Old Mare, a Haggis, and so on, all pertain to the clouted shoe. The moral which he draws is one the world is not out of need of: to see ourselves as others see us would give our vanity a plucking;

'What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us
And ev'n devotion!'

That vanity creeps into devotion is not unknown to the world. A worthy in my native vale, who imagined himself not only powerful in prayer, but that he had a sort of divinity of look conferred upon him when he knelt, turned round to his wife in the midst of his fervour, and said, 'Tibbie! how do I look when I

* "Lunardi made two ascents in his balloon from the Green of Glasgow, the first on the 5th of November, 1785, the second on the 5th of December following. It would appear that, in the Poet's day, a particular description of women's bonnets was named after the daring aeronaut."
CHAMBERS.]

pray?' Another of our Nithsdale holy Willies, who commonly volunteered a prayer when a corpse was lifted at a burial, arrived too late on one occasion, and found his place supplied by a meek, mild man, whose calmness was mistaken for coldness. 'Sit you down, sir,' said the other, pushing him aside, 'your word has no weight at all;' and, holding up his hands, poured out a thundering prayer, which might have been heard a mile down the wind."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

"This is a homely enough subject for the muse; but, lowly as it is, ample justice has been done to it. In his choice of subjects, Burns was by no means very fastidious, and more refined tastes would not have had the hardihood to introduce the

> 'Ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
> Detested, shunn'd, by saunt and sinner,'

as a vehicle for humorous sarcasm. The best verse, however, is the last; and, if poetical merit were to be determined by frequency of quotation, it would stand very high in the scale. It is on every person's lips."—MOTHERWELL.]

Epistle to John Rankine,

INCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin'!
There's monie godly folks are thinkin'
Your dreams* an' tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae monie cracks an' cants,
And in your wicked, drucken rants,
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
An' fill them fou;†
And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen through.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!
Spare't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in black!
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives't aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skaithing,
It's just the blue-gown badge an' claithing‡
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair;
Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect
Yon sang,† ye'll sen't wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarcely spread her wing!
I've play'd mysel a bonnie spring,
An' danc'd my fill!
I'd better gaen an' sair't the king,
At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
An' brought a paitrick to the grun',
A bonnie hen,
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for't;
But, deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

Some auld, us'd hands had taen a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot;
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn'd to lie;
So gat the whissle o' my groat,
An' pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my pouther an' my hail,
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!
The game shall pay o'er moor an' dale,
For this, niest year.

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* A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side.—R. B.

† ["Some occurrence is evidently here alluded to. We have heard the following account of it:—A noted zealot of the opposite party (the name of Holy Willie has been mentioned, but more probably, from the context, the individual must have been a clergyman) calling on Mr. Rankine on business, the latter invited him to take a glass. With much entreaty the visiter was prevailed on to make a very small modicum of toddy. The stranger remarking that the liquor proved very strong, Mr. Rankine pointed out that a little more hot water might improve it. The kettle was accordingly resorted to, but still the liquor appeared over-potent. Again he filled up. Still, no diminution of strength. All this time he was sipping and sipping. By and bye, the liquor began to appear only too weak, and at length the reluctant guest ended by tumbling dead-drunk on the floor. The trick played upon him requires, of course, no explanation."—CHAMBERS.]

‡ ["The allusion here is to a privileged class of mendicants well known in Scotland by the name of 'Blue Gowns.' The order was instituted by James V. of Scotland, the royal 'Gaberlunzie-Man.' The brethren of the order assemble at Edinburgh every year, on the king's birthday, when each is presented with a new blue gown or cloak, and a sum equal to a penny for each year of the king's age. To the breast of the gown is attached a round pewter plate, on which is inscribed the name of the wearer, and his warranty to pass unmolested.—The insignia of the order is only bestowed on persons of good moral character; and by it they are distinguished from such 'Randie gangrel bodies,' as

> 'In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore
> To drink their orra duddies.'"

MOTHERWELL.]

§ A song he had promised the author.—R. B.

As soon's the clockin-time is by,
An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
L—d, I'se hae sportin' by an' by,
For my gowd guinea:
Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
For't in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the wame
Scarce thro' the feathers;
An' baith a yellow George to claim,
An' thole their blethers!

It pits me aye as mad's a hare;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

[John Rankine lived at Adam-Hill, in Ayrshire, and merited the praise of "rough and ready-witted," which Burns bestowed upon him. The "dream which was then making a noise in the country side" may be related as an instance of his caustic humour. Lord K——, it is said, was in the practice of calling all his familiar acquaintances "brutes," and sometimes "damned brutes."—"Well, ye brute, how are ye to-day, ye d—d brute?" was his usual mode of salutation. Once, in company, his lordship having indulged in this rudeness more than his wont, turned to Rankine, and exclaimed, "Ye d—d brute, are ye dumb? Have ye no queer, sly story to tell us?"—"I have nae story," said Rankine, "but last night I had an odd dream."—"Out with it, by all means," said the other.—"Aweel, ye see," said Rankine, "I dreamed I was dead, and that for keeping other than good company upon earth I was damned. When I knocked at hell-door, wha should open it, but the deil; he was in a rough humour, and said 'Wha may ye be, and what's your name?'—'My name,' quoth I, 'is John Rankine, and my dwelling-place was Adam-Hill.'—'Gae wa' wi',' quoth Satan, 'ye canna be here; ye're ane of Lord K——'s damned brutes—hell's fu' o' them already!'" This sharp rebuke, it is said, polished for the future his lordship's speech.

Regarding this poem, and the circumstances to which it alludes, we subjoin the following excellent remarks from the pen of Mr. Lockhart:—

"The poet had not, as he confesses, come unscathed out of the society of those persons of 'liberal opinions' with whom he consorted in Irvine (during his flax-dressing experiment); and he expressly attributes to their lessons the scrape into which he fell soon after 'he put his hand to plough again.' He was compelled, according to the then almost universal custom of rural parishes in Scotland, to do penance in church, before the congregation, in consequence of the birth of an illegitimate child; and, whatever may be thought of the propriety of such exhibitions, there can be no difference of opinion as to the culpable levity with which he describes the nature of his offence, and the still more reprehensible bitterness with which, in his epistle to Rankine, he inveighs against the clergyman, who, in rebuking him, only performed what was then a regular part of the clerical duty, and a part of it that could never have been at all agreeable to the worthy man whom he satirizes under the appellation of Daddie Auld."

Verses to the same;

ON HIS WRITING TO THE POET, THAT A GIRL IN THAT PART OF THE COUNTRY WAS WITH CHILD BY HIM.*

I AM a keeper of the law
In some sma' points, altho' not a';
Some people tell me gin I fa',
Ae way or ither,
The breaking of ae point, tho' sma',
Breaks a' thegither.

I hae been in for't ance or twice,
And winna say o'er far for thrice,
Yet never met with that surprise
That broke my rest,
But now a rumour's like to rise,
A whaup's i' the nest.

The Poet's Welcome to his Illegitimate Child.†

THOU'S welcome, wean! mischanter fa' me,
If ought of thee, or of thy mammy,
Shall ever danton me, or awe me,
My sweet wee lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
Tit-ta or daddy.

Wee image of my bonnie Betty,
I, fatherly, will kiss and daut thee,

* [The above verses first appeared in a small octavo volume, entitled "Poems ascribed to Robert Burns, the Ayr-shire Bard," being a collection of pieces which either had not come under the attention of Dr. Currie, or which his fastidious taste had rejected. It was in this volume that originally appeared Burns's inimitable poem, "The JOLLY BEGGARS."]

† [The subject of these verses was the Poet's illegitimate daughter whom, in "The Inventory," he styles his

"Sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess."

In consequence of the Poet's intention to go to Jamaica, he executed a deed at Mossgiel, on the 22nd of July, 1786, whereby he acknowledged himself the father of a child named Elizabeth, 'begot upon Elizabeth Paton, in Largieside.' This interesting document is elsewhere given. She is said to have resembled the Poet more than any other of his children. She grew up to womanhood, was married, and had a family. Her death is thus announced in the Scots Magazine:—December 8th, 1817. Died Elizabeth Burns, wife of Mr. John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, near Whitburn. She was the daughter of the celebrated Robert Burns, and the subject of some of his most beautiful lines.]

As dear an' near my heart I set thee
Wi' as guid will,
As a' the priests had seen me get thee
That's out o' h-ll.

What tho' they ca' me fornicator,
An' tease my name in kintra clatter:
The mair they talk I'm kenn'd the better,
E'en let them clash!
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter
To gie ane fash.

Sweet fruit o' monie a merry dint,
My funny toil is now a' tint,
Sin' thou came to the warld asklent,
Which fools may scoff at;
In my last plack thy part's be in't—
The better half o't.

And if thou be what I wad hae thee,
And tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
A lovin' father I'll be to thee,
If thou be spar'd:
Thro' a' thy childish years I'll e'e thee,
An' think't weel war'd.

Gude grant that thou may aye inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, and merit,
An' thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
Without his failin's,
'Twill please me mair to hear and see't
Than stockit mailens.

[*The Poet's welcome to an Illegitimate Child* was composed on the same occasion [as the preceding]—a piece in which some very manly feelings are expressed, along with others which it can give no one pleasure to contemplate. There is a song in honour of the same occasion, or a similar one, about the same period, *The rantin dog the Daddie o't*, which exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying, in his shame.

"When I consider his tender affection for the surviving members of his own family, and the reverence with which he ever regarded the memory of the father whom he had so recently buried, I cannot believe that Burns has thought fit to record in verse all the feelings which this exposure excited in his bosom. 'To wave (in his own language) the quantum of the sin,' he who, two years afterwards, wrote the *Cotter's Saturday Night* had not, we may be sure, hardened his heart to the thought of bringing additional sorrow and unexpected shame to the fire-side of a widowed mother. But his false pride recoiled from letting his jovial associates guess how little he was able to drown the whispers of the *still small voice;* and the fermenting bitterness of a mind ill at ease within itself escaped (as may be too often traced in the history of satirists,) in the shape of angry sarcasms against others, who, whatever their private errors might be, had at least done him no wrong.

"It is impossible not to smile at one item of consolation which Burns proposes to himself on this occasion:—

'The mair they talk, I'm kenn'd the better;
E'en let them clash!'

This is indeed a singular manifestation of 'the last infirmity of noble minds.'"—LOCKHART.

Verses on a Scotch Bard,

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come, mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,*
An' owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin' core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore,
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar
In social key;
For now he's taen anither shore, †
An' owre the sea!

The bonnie lasses weel may wiss him,
An' in their dear petitions place him: ‡
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
That's owre the sea!

O fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou ta'en aff some drowsy bummle
Wha can do nought but fyke and fumble,
'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as onie wumble,
That's owre the sea!

Auld, cantie Kyle § may weepers wear,
An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear;
'Twill mak || her poor, auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee;
He was her laureate monie a year,
That's owre the sea!

He saw misfortune's cauld nor'-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a berth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea.

To tremble under fortune's cummock,
On ¶ scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,

---

* VAR.—Our billie, ROB, has ta'en a jink.—M.S.
† He's cantered to anither shore.—M.S.
‡ An' pray kind Fortune to redress him.—M.S.

§ Kilmarnock.
‖ VAR.—Gar.—M.S.
¶ An.—M.S.

Could ill agree;
So, row't his hurdies in a hammock,
An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding:
He dealt it free:
The muse was a' that he took pride in
That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel;
Ye'll find him aye a dainty chiel,
And fu' o' glee;
He wad na wrang'd the vera deil
That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!*
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie!
I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie
Tho' owre the sea!

["Burns in this poem alludes to himself. It was composed, and placed in the hands of a friend, to be read at the first masonic meeting after he had left them for the West Indies. Fortunately for his country, his destiny was otherwise ruled. The identity of the Bard with the hero of these verses is placed beyond a doubt by a MS. copy of the verses, in Burns's own hand-writing, wherein the last line of the first stanza stands thus:—

Our billie Rob has ta'en a jink.

The poem must, therefore, have been written in 1786. An old man of the west of Scotland, who still lives to remember him with affection, says—'He was subject to great fluctuation of spirits—sometimes he was so depressed that he would shun his most intimate friends; and when observing any one he knew approaching him on the road, he hesitated not to leap over a hedge, or strike into another path, to avoid being disturbed.' He was at such periods as likely to be in a poetic reverie as in a melancholy one."]—CUNNINGHAM.

Verses written under Violent Grief.

ACCEPT the gift a friend sincere
Wad on thy worth be pressin';
Remembrance oft may start a tear,
But oh! that tenderness forbear,
Though 'twad my sorrows lessen.

My morning raise sae clear and fair,
I thought sair storms wad never
Bedew the scene; but grief and care
In wildest fury hae made bare
My peace, my hope, for ever!

You think I'm glad; oh, I pay weel
For a' the joy I borrow,
In solitude—then, then I feel
I canna to mysel' conceal
My deeply ranklin' sorrow.

Farewell! within thy bosom free
A sigh may whiles awaken;
A tear may wet thy laughin' e'e,
For Scotia's son—ance gay like thee—
Now hopeless, comfortless, forsaken!

["The above verses appear to have been written in the distressing summer of 1786, when the poet's prospects were at the dreariest, and the very wife of his fondest affection had forsaken him. From the time, and other circumstances, we may conjecture that the present alluded to was a copy of the Kilmarnock edition of the poems, then newly published."—CHAMBERS.]

The Farewell.

"The valiant in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,
To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
To helpless children! then, O then! he feels
The point of misery fest'ring in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, such am I! undone!"

Thomson's EDWARD AND ELEANORA

I.

FAREWELL, old Scotia's bleak domains,
Far dearer than the torrid plains
Where rich ananas blow!
Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess!† tho' thou'rt bereft
Of my parental care;
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou'lt share!
Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith,‡ my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
Oh then befriend my Jean!

II.

What bursting anguish tears my heart!
From thee, my Jeannie, must I part!
Thou, weeping, answ'rest, "No!"

---

* VAR.—Then fare-ye-weel, my rhyming billie!—M.S.

† The Bard's illegitimate daughter.

‡ James Smith, Merchant, in Mauchline—the same person to whom one of the Poet's best Epistles is addressed.

Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace,
I, for thy sake, must go!
Thee, Hamilton and Aiken * dear,
A grateful, warm adieu!
I, with a much-indebted tear,
Shall still remember you!
All-hail then, the gale then,
Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
It rustles, and whistles—
I'll never see thee more!

[These very touching stanzas were composed in the Autumn of 1786, when the prospects of the poet darkened, and he looked towards the West-Indies as a place of refuge, and perhaps of hope. He alludes to every one who shared his affections:—his mother—his brother Gilbert—his illegitimate child Elizabeth,—whom he consigned to his brother's care, and for whose support he had appropriated the copyright of his Poems, and to his friends Smith, Hamilton, and Aiken; but in nothing he ever wrote was his affection for Jean Armour more tenderly or more naturally displayed. The verses were first published in the Rev. Hamilton Paul's edition of the works of Burns—their authenticity is unquestionable.]

A Dedication to Gabin Hamilton, Esq.

Expect na, sir, in this narration,
A fleechin, fleth'rin dedication,
To roose you up, an' ca you guid,
An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
Because ye're surnam'd like his Grace;
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tir'd—and sae are ye,
Wi' monie a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun do, sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folks for a wamefu';
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin',
Its just sic poet, an' sic patron.

The poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp him,
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The patron (Sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me),
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant
He downa see a poor man want;
What's no his ain, he winna tak' it,
What ance he says, he winna break it;
Ought he can lend, he'll no refus 't,
Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang:
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
It's no thro' terror of d-mn-tion;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' a winnock frae a wh-re,
But point the rake that tak's the door;
Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane,
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter, stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang, wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin'!
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him.
While o'er the harp pale mis'ry moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my Dedication;
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq., and Robert Aiken, Esq. These gentlemen were at this period the chief advisers and patrons of the Poet.

When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to you:
Because (ye need na tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel'.

Then patronize them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever——
I had amaist said, ever *pray*;
But that's a word I need na say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o't;
I'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't;
But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r
That kens or hears about you, Sir—

"May ne'er misfortune's growling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the Clerk!
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far-honour'd name
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizen,
Are frae their nuptial labours risen:
Five bonnie lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows stout an' able
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days;
Till his wee curlie John's* ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion
Wi' complimentary effusion:
But, whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest with fortune's smiles and favours,
I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which pow'rs above prevent)
That iron-hearted carl, Want,
Attended in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your humble servant then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But by a poor man's hopes in heav'n!
While recollection's pow'r is giv'n,
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
Should recognize my master dear,
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, Sir, your hand—my friend and brother!

[In a copy of this "Dedication," in the Poet's hand-writing, the circumstance of riding on the sabbath-day is thus neatly introduced:—

"He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,
An' pricks the beast as if 't were Monday."

* [John Hamilton, Esquire, now residing in London—a worthy scion of a noble stock.]

"I regard this poem as one of Burns's very best. There is a great deal of humour and good nature in it."—HOGG.

"The epistles of Burns, in which may be included his Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq., discover, like his other writings, the powers of a superior understanding. They display deep insight into human nature, a gay and happy strain of reflection, great independence of sentiment and generosity of heart."—CURRIE.

Gavin Hamilton, the steady friend of the poet, was descended from the Hamiltons of Kype in Lanark-shire.

"It is related of the laird of Kype, that he was once paying a visit to the Duke of Hamilton, when his Grace inquired in what degree he was related to the ducal house, and whereabouts in the family tree the race of Kype was to be found. 'It would be needless to seek the root among the branches,' answered the haughty laird, who perhaps had some pretensions to be of the principal stock of the Hamiltons, or knew, at least, that the claims of the ducal house to the chieftainship were by no means clear."—CHAMBERS.

ELEGY

ON

The Death of Robert Ruisseaux.

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash't him,
Except the moment that they crush't him:
For sune as chance or fate had hush't 'em,
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lash't 'em,
And thought it sport.

Tho' he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roos'd him than!

[Cromek found this fragment among the papers of Burns, and printed it in the Reliques, with the intimation only that Ruisseaux was a play upon the Poet's own name. It is probably a portion of a poem in which he desired to dissect himself, and shew his evil and his good to the world; but, not having commenced so happily as he wished, he threw it aside, and resumed the subject in that noble and touching strain, "A

Bard's Epitaph."—"He meets us in his compositions," says Campbell, "undisguised as a peasant; at the same time his observations go extensively into life, like those of a man who felt the proper dignity of human nature in the character of a peasant." Perhaps of all poets Burns poured most of himself into poetry. Byron appears in his verse as in a mask, and never comes fairly and unhesitatingly forward; of Scott,

> "Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
> And some the waving of a gown."

Of Campbell personally we know nothing from his verse; nor has Southey shewn himself. Burns painted his own portrait, and did it so darkly that others have presumptuously increased the gloom in their delineations of his character.—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

Letter to James Tait,

OF GLENCONNER.

AULD comrade dear, and brither sinner,
How's a' the folk about Glenconner?
How do ye this blae eastlin win',
That's like to blaw a body blin'?
For me, my faculties are frozen,
My dearest member nearly dozen'.
I've sent you here, by Johnnie Simson,
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on!
Reid, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
An' Smith, to common sense appealing.
Philosophers have fought an' wrangled,
An' meikle Greek an' Latin mangled,
Till wi' their logic-jargon tir'd,
An' in the depth of science mir'd,
To common sense they now appeal,
What wives an' wabsters see and feel.
But, hark ye, frien'! I charge you strictly,
Peruse them, an' return them quickly,
For now I'm grown sae cursed douce
I pray an' ponder but the house,
My shins, my lane, I there sit roastin',
Perusing Bunyan, Brown, an' Boston;
Till by an' by, if I haud on,
I'll grunt a real gospel-groan:
Already I begin to try it,
To cast my e'en up like a pyet,
When by the gun she tumbles o'er,
Flutt'ring an' gasping in her gore:
Sae shortly you shall see me bright,
A burning an' a shining light.

My heart-warm love to guid auld Glen,
The ace an' wale of honest men:
When bending down wi' auld grey hairs,
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
An' views beyond the grave comfort him.
His worthy fam'ly, far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear!

My auld schoolfellow, preacher Willie,
The manly tar, my mason Billie,
An' Auchenbay, I wish him joy;
If he's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be dad, and Meg the mither,
Just five-and-forty years thegither!
An' no forgetting wabster Charlie,
I'm tauld he offers very fairly.
An' L—d, remember singing Sannock,
Wi' hale-breeks, saxpence, an' a bannock.

An' next my auld acquaintance, Nancy,
Since she is fitted to her fancy;
An' her kind stars hae airted till her
A good chiel wi' a pickle siller.
My kindest, best respects I sen' it,
To cousin Kate an' sister Janet;
Tell them, frae me, wi' chiels be cautious,
For, faith, they'll aiblins fin' them fashious;
To grant a heart is fairly civil,
But to grant a maidenhead's the devil.—
An' lastly, Jamie, for yoursel,
May guardian angels tak' a spell,
An' steer you seven miles south o' hell:
But first, before you see heav'n's glory,
May ye get monie a merry story,
Monie a laugh, and monie a drink,
And aye eneugh o' needfu' clink.

Now fare ye weel, an' joy be wi' you,
For my sake this I beg it o' you,
Assist poor Simson a' ye can,
Ye'll fin' him just an honest man:
Sae I conclude, and quat my chanter,
Your's, saint or sinner,

ROB THE RANTER.*

[Tait, of Glenconner, accompanied Burns to Nithsdale in 1788, and advised him respecting the farm of Ellisland.—"I am just returned," says the Poet to a correspondent, "from Miller's farm. My old friend, whom I took with me, was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent, sensible farmer in the county, and his advice has staggered me a good deal." To a correspondent of another complexion and character, Burns wrote, regarding "Old Glenconner,"—"I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy, intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot: he thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't trust this to any body in writing but you."

The poem is one of those hasty and every-day-business-like effusions which Burns occasionally penned. Though not at all equal to some of his earlier epistles, yet it is well worth preserving, as a proof of the ease with which

* See a similar signature to the "Third Epistle to John Lapraik."

he could wind verse round any topic, and conduct the duties and the courtesies of life in song. His account of having 'grown sae cursed douce,' and scorching himself at the fire—

'Perusing Bunyan, Brown, and Boston,'

is archly introduced. The persons to whom a part of the letter alludes were of Glenconner's household or his neighbours. The 'manly tar' was probably Richard Brown."—CUNNINGHAM.]

ON THE

Birth of a Posthumous Child.*

SWEET flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a pray'r,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirples o'er the lea,
Chill, on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
The bitter frost and snaw!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother-plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer-morn:
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

"These stanzas," says Burns in his memoranda, "were composed on the birth of a posthumous child, born in peculiar circumstances of family distress." A father was carried to the grave a few months before his only son was born; almost a type of what happened at no distant date in the Poet's own household. Not only are the chief circumstances of the case applicable, but the very words which he used in expressing the woe of another give an image of what was suffered in Burns'-street, in July, 1796.

"The sheltering tree was removed in both cases, and tender flowerets exposed to the storm. I shall never forget the time when Burns's boys appeared in the streets of Dumfries, in mourning for their father's death. All eyes were turned in sympathy on them—their weepers, as the bands of white cambric on their coat-cuffs were called, and their forlorn and wondering looks, live in more memories than mine."

CUNNINGHAM.]

To Miss Cruikshanks,†

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

BEAUTEOUS rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,‡
Never may'st thou, lovely flow'r,
Chilly shrink in sleety show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view,
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

* [The mother was a daughter of the Poet's friend, Mrs. Dunlop. She and the little flow'ret are often alluded to in the Poet's letters to that lady. Miss Susan Dunlop had married a French gentleman of good birth and fortune, of the name of Henri. They lived at Loudoun Castle in Ayrshire, where, June 22, 1790, M. Henri was cut off by a cold, caught in consequence of exposure to wet. His son and heir, born in the subsequent November, was the subject of the above fine verses. In the autumn of 1792, Mrs. Henri, accompanied by her infant, went to the south of France. In a subsequent letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Burns deplores the dangerous and distressing situation of the young mother, exposed to the tumults of the Revolution; and he has soon after occasion to condole with his venerable friend on the death of her daughter in a foreign land—"that land," says the Poet, "convulsed with every horror that can harrow the human feelings." When this sad event took place, the orphan child fell under the immediate care of his paternal grandfather, who, however, was soon obliged to take refuge in Switzerland, leaving the infant behind him. Years passed—he and the Scotch friends of the child heard nothing of it, and concluded that it was lost. At length, when the elder Henri was enabled to return to his ancestral domains, he had the unspeakable satisfaction of finding that his grandson and heir was alive and well, having never been removed from the place. The child had been protected and reared with the greatest care by a worthy female, Mademoiselle Susette, formerly a domestic of the family. This excellent person had even contrived, through all the levelling violences of the intervening period, to preserve in her young charge the feelings appropriate to his rank. Though absolutely indebted to her industry for his bread, she had caused him always to be seated by himself at table, and regularly waited on, so that the otherwise plebeian circumstances in which he lived did not greatly affect him. The subject of Burns's stanzas is now proprietor of the family estates; and it is agreeable to add that Mademoiselle Susette still (1838) lives in his paternal mansion, in the enjoyment of that grateful respect to which her fidelity and discretion so eminently entitle her. Such is the somewhat extraordinary history of this "Sweet flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer."—CHAMBERS.]

† [The young lady, who was the subject of these beautiful lines, was then only twelve years old; she afterwards became the wife of Mr. Henderson, a writer, or legal practitioner at Jedburgh. Burns also composed his song entitled, 'A Rosebud by my early walk,' in honour of the same beautiful young lady. Mr. Cruickshank's house consisted of a floor at the top of a *common stair* now marked No. 30, in St. James's Square, Edinburgh; here the poet for some time lived with him, his room being one which has a window looking out from the gable of the house upon the green, behind the General Register House. Here also Burns lay while confined with a bruised limb in the winter of 1787-8. Mr. Cruickshank died, March 8, 1795.]

‡ VAR. On the early day.

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem:
'Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

[Burns often intimated his friendships—or attachments—in verse or prose, on the blank leaf of a favourite book, and then presented the volume to the object of his regard. He was mostly attached to ladies whose voices were sweet and harmonious, or who excelled in music. Of the spell which music threw over him we have the following very graphic account, from one who knew him well:—"About the end of October, I called for him at the house of a friend, whose daughter, though not more than twelve, was a considerable proficient in music. I found him seated by the harpsichord of this young lady, listening with the keenest interest to his own verses, which she sang and accompanied, and adjusting them to the music by repeated trials of the effect. In this occupation he was totally absorbed; it was difficult to draw his attention from it for a moment; and it is to the enthusiasm which the nature of his undertaking inspired that the excellence of its execution must be ascribed. Had his ardour been less, I should probably have regretted to see his genius no longer left free to the impulse of inclination, and the excitement of interesting occurrences, but employed in amendment or imitation, and partly expended in overcoming the difficulties occasioned by an additional circumspection, both in subject and measure."—Professor Walker.]

Willie Chalmers.

Mr. W. Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayr-shire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his dulcinea. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her, and wrote as follows:—R. B.

I.

Madam,
Wi' braw new branks in mickle pride,
And eke a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I'm got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin;
Whiles owre a bush wi' downward crush:
The doited beastie stammers;
Then up he gets, and off he sets,
For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

II.

I doubt na, lass, that weel-kenn'd name
May cost a pair o' blushes;
I am nae stranger to your fame,
Nor his warm-urged wishes.
Your bonnie face sae mild and sweet
His honest heart enamours,
And faith ye'll no be lost a whit,
Tho' waired on Willie Chalmers.

III.

Auld Truth hersel' might swear ye're fair,
And Honour safely back her,
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne'er a ane mistak' her:
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy Palmers;
Nae wonder then they've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

IV.

I doubt nae Fortune may you shore
Some mim-mou'd pouther'd priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
And band upon his breastie:
But oh! what signifies to you
His lexicons and grammars:
The feeling heart's the royal blue,
And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

V.

Some gapin', glowrin', countra laird,
May warsle for your favour;
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
And hoast up some palaver.
My bonny maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

VI.

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom
Inspires my muse to gie 'm his dues,
For de'il a hair I roose him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,—
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers.

["William Chalmers was, in those days, a writer in Ayr, and a staunch comrade of the Poet: he was his correspondent also: but only one of the letters of Burns has survived the change which time and death make. I have not heard that the lady yielded to the influence of verse: women are seldom rhymed into wedlock."—Cunningham.]

[The above lively verses were first printed by Mr. Lockhart, from some MSS. which were sent by the poet to Lady Harriet Don.]

A Prayer,

LEFT, BY THE AUTHOR, AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE, IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

I.

O THOU dread Pow'r, who reign'st above!
I know Thou wilt me hear,
When, for this scene of peace and love,
I make my prayer sincere.

II.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleased to spare!
To bless his filial little flock,
And show what good men are.

III.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

IV.

Their hope—their stay—their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush—
Bless him, thou GOD of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

V.

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand—
Guide Thou their steps alway!

VI.

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driv'n,
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
A family in Heav'n!

"The first time," says Gilbert Burns, "Robert "heard the spinnet played upon was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, then minister of Loudon, now in Glasgow, having given up the parish in favour of his son. Dr. Lawrie had several daughters—one of them played; the father and the mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the Poet, and the other guests mixed in it. It was a delightful family-scene for our Poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept."

[Dr. Lawrie was the medium through whom Dr. Blacklock transmitted the letter by which Burns was arrested on his flight to the West Indies, and induced to go to Edinburgh. This letter is now (1838) in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Balfour Graham, minister of North Berwick, who is connected with the family by marriage.]

Epistle to Gabin Hamilton, Esq.,

MAUCHLINE.

RECOMMENDING A BOY.

Mosgaville, May 3, 1786.

I.

I HOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
An' wad hae don't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As, faith, I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
An' tellin' lies about them:
As lieve then, I'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted otherwhere.

II.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough,
An' bout a house that's rude an' rough,
The boy might learn to swear;
But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
An' get sic fair example straught,
I ha'e na ony fear.
Ye'll catechise him every quirk,
An' shore him weel wi' hell;
An' gar him follow to the kirk—
Aye when ye gang yoursel.
If ye then, maun be then
Frae hame this comin' Friday;
Then please, Sir, to lea'e, Sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

III.

My word of honour I hae gi'en,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the Warld's worm;
To try to get the twa to gree,
An' name the airles* an' the fee,
In legal mode an' form:
I ken he weel a snick can draw,
When simple bodies let him;
An' if a Devil be at a',
In faith he's sure to get him.
To phrase you, an' praise you,
Ye ken your Laureat scorns:
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

[Master Tootie, Cromek informs us, lived in Mauchline, and dealt in cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age, and so bring a higher price. He was an artful, trick-contriving person: hence he is called a 'sneck-drawer,' an epithet which the Bard had already appled to—the devil. In his "Address to the Deil," he styles that august personage—an *auld sneck-drawing dog!*]

* The airles—earnest money.

Epistle to Mr. M'Adam,

OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN.

SIR, o'er a gill I gat your card,
I trow it made me proud;
"See wha tak's notice o' the bard!"
I lap and cry'd fu' loud,

"Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million;
I'll cock my nose aboon them a'—
I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!"

'Twas noble, Sir; 'twas like yoursel,
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile, ye ken fu' weel,
Is aye a blest infection.

Tho' by his* banes wha in a tub
Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs, thro' dirt and dub,
I independent stand ay.—

And when those legs to guid, warm kail,
Wi' welcome canna bear me;
A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
And barley-scone shall cheer me.

Heav'n spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' mony flow'ry simmers!
And bless your bonnie lasses baith,
I'm tauld they're loosome kimmers!

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry!
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

[The above is a hasty, unpremeditated effusion. In the commencement of his poetic career, Burns, receiving an obliging letter from the laird of Craigen-Gillan, to whom his friend Woodburn was factor, he took up a sheet of paper, as he "sat owre a gill," and thanked him in verse. The Bard, amid his joy, forgets not that he is independent; and, in asserting his independence, he remembers that old age will come, and perhaps poverty; but then "a lee dyke-side and barley-scone" would cheer one who had been accustomed to simple fare.]

Nature's Law.

A POEM,

HUMBLY INSCRIBED

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

"Great nature spoke, observant man obeyed."—POPE.

I.

LET other heroes boast their scars,
The marks of sturt and strife;
And other poets sing of wars,
The plagues of human life:
Shame fa' the fun, wi' sword and gun,
To slap mankind like lumber!
I sing his name and nobler fame,
Wha multiplies our number.

II.

Great Nature spoke, with air benign,
"Go on, ye human race!
This lower world I you resign;
Be fruitful and increase.
The liquid fire of strong desire
I've pour'd it in each bosom;
Here, in this hand, does mankind stand,
And there, is beauty's blossom!"

III.

The hero of these artless strains,
A lowly bard was he,
Who sung his rhymes in Coila's plains,
With mickle mirth an' glee;
Kind Nature's care had given his share,
Large, of the flaming current;
And, all devout, he never sought
To stem the sacred torrent.

IV.

He felt the powerful, high behest,
Thrill, vital, thro' and thro';
And sought a correspondent breast,
To give obedience due:
Propitious Powers screen'd the young flow'rs
From mildews of abortion;
And lo! the bard, a great reward,
Has got a double portion!

V.

Auld, cantie Coil may count the day,
As annual it returns,
The third of Libra's equal sway,
That gave another Burns,
With future rhymes, an' other times,
To emulate his sire;
To sing auld Coil in nobler style,
With more poetic fire.

VI.

Ye powers of peace, and peaceful song,
Look down with gracious eyes;
And bless auld Coila, large and long,
With multiplying joys;
Lang may she stand to prop the land,
The flow'r of ancient nations;
And Burns's spring, her fame to sing,
To endless generations!

[These verses were first published in Pickering's edition of the poetical works of Burns, printed from the original MS. in the Poet's hand-writing. They appear to have been composed soon after his "Bonnie Jean" had presented him with twins.]

* Diogenes.

Answer to a Poetical Epistle,

SENT TO THE AUTHOR BY A TAILOR.

WHAT ails ye now, ye lousie b—h,
To thresh my back at sic a pitch?
Losh, man! hae mercy wi' your natch,
Your bodkin's bauld,
I didna suffer ha'f sae much
Frae Daddie Auld.

What tho' at times when I grow crouse,
I gie the dames a random pouse,
Is that enough for you to souse
Your servant sae?
Gae mind your seam, ye prick-the-louse,
An' jag-the-flae.

King David, o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischief
As fill'd his after life wi' grief,
An' bluidy rants,
An' yet he's rank'd among the chief
O' lang-syne saunts.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
My wicked rhymes, an' drucken rants,
I'll gie auld cloven Clooty's haunts
An unco slip yet.
An' snugly sit among the saunts
At Davie's hip yet.

But fegs, the Session says I maun
Gae fa' upon anither plan,
Than garrin' lasses cowp the cran
Clean heels owre body,
And sairly thole their mither's ban
Afore the howdy.

This leads me on, to tell for sport,
How I did wi' the Session sort,—
Auld Clinkum at the inner port
Cry'd three times—"Robin!
Come hither, lad, an' answer for 't,
Ye're blamed for jobbin'."

Wi' pinch I pat a Sunday's face on,
An' snoov'd awa' before the Session;
I made an open fair confession—
I scorn'd to lie;
An' syne Mess John, beyond expression,
Fell foul o' me.

* * * *

[The remaining five verses, in which the Poet gives a description of his interview with the Kirk-Session, and relates some of the conversation that ensued, are too free and unceremonious to be inserted.]

[A tailor in the neighbourhood of Mauchline took it upon him, it seems, to lecture Burns in verse, upon his loose conversation and behaviour. The Poet answered him in a strain which must have made the other, as Hamilton says,

"Strangely fidge and fike."

It has been surmised that Burns wrote the monitory letter himself, for the sake of the answer. "To be able to write down to the level of the following verses," says Mr. Cunningham, "is a compliment to his genius, though not a just one."

Epistle from a Tailor—

(THOMAS WALKER, OCHILTREE,)—

TO ROBERT BURNS.

WHAT waefu' news is this I hear,
Frae greeting I can scarce forbear,
Folks tell me ye're gaun aff this year,
Out o'er the sea,
And lasses wham ye lo'e sae dear
Will greet for thee.

Weel wad I like war ye to stay,
But, Robin, since you will away,
I hae a word yet mair to say,
And maybe twa;
May He protect us night and day,
That made us a'.

Whar thou art gaun, keep mind frae me,
Seek Him to bear thee companie,
And, Robin, whan ye come to die,
Ye'll won aboon,
An' live at peace an' unity
Ayont the moon.

Some tell me, Rab, ye dinna fear
To get a wean, an' curse an' swear,
I'm unco wae, my lad, to hear
O' sic a trade,
Could I persuade ye to forbear,
I wad be glad.

Fu' weel ye ken ye'll gang to hell,
Gin ye persist in doin' ill—
Waes me! ye're hurlin' down the hill
Withouten dread,
An' ye'll get leave to swear your fill
After ye're dead.

There, walth o' women ye'll get near,
But gettin' weans ye will forbear,
Ye'll never say, my bonnie dear,
Come, gie's a kiss—
Nae kissing there—ye'll girn an' sneer,
An' ither hiss.

O Rab! lay by thy foolish tricks,
An' steer nae mair the female sex,
Or some day ye'll come through the pricks,
And that ye'll see;
Ye'll fin' hard living wi' Auld Nicks—
I'm wae for thee.

But what's this comes wi' sic a knell,
Amaist as loud as ony bell,
While it does mak' my conscience tell
Me what is true,
I'm but a ragget cowt mysel',
Owre sib to you!

We're owre like those wha think it fit
To stuff their noddles fu' o' wit,

An' yet content in darkness sit,
Wha shun the light,
Wad let them see to 'scape the pit
That lang dark night.

But fareweel, Rab, I maun awa,'
May He that made us keep us a',
For that would be a dreadfu' fa',
And hurt us sair,
Lad, ye wad never mend ava,
Sae, Rab, tak' care.]

Lines written on a Bank-note.

WAE worth thy power, thou cursed leaf!
Fell source o' a' my woe and grief!
For lack o' thee I've lost my lass!
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
I see the children of affliction
Unaided, thro' thy curs'd restriction.
I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile,
Amid his hapless victim's spoil,
And, for thy potence, vainly wish'd
To crush the villain in the dust.
For lack o' thee, I leave this much-lov'd shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet auld Scotland more.
R. B.—*Kyle.*

[The Bank-note, on the back of which these characteristic lines were endorsed, came into the hands of Mr. James F. Gracie, banker in Dumfries: he knew the hand-writing of the Poet, and preserved it as a curiosity. The note is of the Bank of Scotland, and is dated so far back as the 1st March, 1780. The lines exhibit the strong marks of the poet's vigorous pen, and are evidently an extempore effusion of his characteristic feelings. They bear internal proof of their having been written at that interesting period of his life when he was on the point of leaving the country, on account of the unfavourable manner in which his proposals for marrying his "Bonny Jean," were at first received by her parents.]

A Dream.

Thoughts, words, & deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely dreams were ne'er indicted treason.

On reading, in the public papers, the "Laureate's Ode,"* with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee; and in his dreaming fancy made the following ADDRESS.—BURNS.

I.

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
May Heav'n augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see,
A humble poet wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

II.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By many a lord an' lady;
"God save the king!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay;
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.

III.

For me, before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's monie waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

IV.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.†

V.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But, faith! I muckle doubt, my Sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

VI.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister;

* [Thomas Warton was then in this servile and ridiculous office. His ode for June 4, 1786, begins as follows:—

"When Freedom nurs'd her native fire
In ancient Greece, and rul'd the lyre,
Her bards disdainful, from the tyrant's brow
The tinsel gifts of flattery tore,
But paid to guiltless power their willing vow,
And to the throne of virtuous kings, &c.

On these verses, the rhymes of the Ayr-shire bard must be allowed to form an odd enough commentary.—CHAMBERS.]

† [The poet alludes here to the immense curtailment of the British dominions, which took place only three years before the writing of this poem, viz. at the close of the American war, when, by the treaties of 1783, the independence of the thirteen United States was acknowledged, and the extensive territory of Louisiana, acquired by the treaty of 1763, was again restored to Spain.]

Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

VII.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,*
A name not envy spairges,)
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, G-d-sake! let nae saving-fit
Abridge your bonnie barges †
An' boats this day.

VIII.

Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax corruption's neck,
And gi'e her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birth-day.

IX.

Hail, Majesty Most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gi'es ye?
Thae bonnie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

X.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak' Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie,‡
By night or day.

XI.

Yet aft a ragged cowte's been known
To mak' a noble aiver;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him at Agincourt § wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John, ‖
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day.

XII.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg, ¶
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys o' Peter,
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

XIII.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks,** I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley,†† stem an' stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
An', large upon her quarter
Come full that day.

XIV.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant ay;
An' German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want ay
On onie day.

XV.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dautit;
But ere the course o' life be thro',
It may be bitter sautit:
An' I hae seen their coggie fu',
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the day was down, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautit
Fu' clean that day.

[To the "Dream," the neglect shown by the Government to the Poet has been imputed. No doubt it was otherwise than acceptable at court; Mrs. Dunlop and Mrs. Stewart of Stair

* [Gait, gett, or gyte, a homely substitute for the word child in Scotland. Sir Walter Scott speaks somewhere of the *gaits' class* in the Edinburgh High School—namely, the class containing the youngest pupils. The above stanza is not the only testimony of admiration which Burns pays to the great Earl of Chatham.]

† [On the supplies for the navy being voted, spring 1786, Captain Macbride counselled some changes in that force, particularly the giving up of 64-gun ships, which occasioned a good deal of discussion.]

‡ [The Right Hon. Charles James Fox.]

§ King Henry V.—R. B.

‖ Sir John Falstaff—vide Shakspeare.—R. B.

¶ The Duke of York.

** William IV., then Duke of Clarence.

†† Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain Royal sailor's amour.—R. B.

solicited, in vain, to have it omitted in the Edinburgh edition. The suppression of the poem would have been of no benefit to the bard. The ear of his Majesty, like that of Pitt and Dundas, was not to be charmed by sweet sounds: he who mistook Pye for a poet was not likely to regard Burns as one. Nor were his ministers more merciful than their master to the tuneful and the inspired: interest and influence were every thing, and genius was as nothing. The merits of the "Dream" are of a high order—the gaiety as well as keenness of the satire, and the vehement rapidity of the verse, are not the only attractions. Even the prose introduction is sarcastic—the Poet, on reading the Laureate's ode, fell asleep—a likely consequence, for the birth-day strains of those times were something of the dullest.

The poem seems prophetic; the young potentate of Wales lived to rue that he had "broken Diana's pales, and rattled dice with Charlie;" nor was the Bishop of Osnaburg long in getting a wife, as well as a ribbon to his lug, but this did not hinder him from going wrong in the very way intimated by the Poet. The hymeneal charter, which he proposes to the Royal Sailor, in the affair of the "glorious galley," or the early marriage which he recommends to the "bonnie blossoms—the royal lasses dainty"—might have been beneficial to Britain. The last verse of the poem seems to intimate the coming of some great change among the nations: had not the island spirit stood firm, a scattering, such as France and other kingdoms endured, might have taken place.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

A Bard's Epitaph.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool?
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng?
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career
Wild as the wave?
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame,
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root.

["Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave, over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of the 'poor inhabitant' it is supposed to be inscribed, that

'Thoughtless follies laid him low
And stain'd his name?'

Who but himself—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to have put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and the record was authentic!"

WORDSWORTH.]

Remorse.

A FRAGMENT.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with an-
Beyond comparison, the worst are those [guish,
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
But when, to all the evil of misfortune,
This sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self,"
Or, worser far, the pangs of keen remorse—
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others,
The young, the innocent, who fondly lo'ed us,
Nay, more—that very love their cause of ruin!
Oh, burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
Oh, happy, happy, enviable man!
Oh, glorious magnanimity of soul!

[These lines occur in an early common-place-book of the poet, and probably relate to the consequences of his first serious error — his unfortunate *liaison* with the charming *fillette*,

alluded to in the Life. They are preceded by the following remarks of the poet:—]

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher Adam Smith, in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but, when our own follies or crimes have made us miserable and wretched, to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

The Twa Dogs.

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,*
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar
Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride—nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Even wi' a tinkler-gypsey's messin'.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,†
Was made lang-syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his towzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaucie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd an' snowkit,
Whyles mice an' moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down ‡
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, an' a' his stents;
He rises when he likes himsel';
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonnie silken purse
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, an' sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee, blastit wonner
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner
Better than ony tenant man
His honour has in a' the lan';
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own its past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh;
A cotter howkin' in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
Baring a quarry, an' sic like;
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right an' tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld an' hunger:
But, how it comes, I never kenn'd yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented:
An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

* [Kyle, or Coil, the native province of the poet, derives its name from Coilus, King of the Picts, alluded to in the Notes to the Vision.]

† Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal.—R. B.

‡ Var.—Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,
They sat them down upon their ——.
Till tir'd at last, an' doucer grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down.—MS.

CÆSAR.

But then, to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
L—d, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk
As I wad by a stinkin' brock.
I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash:
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!*

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches?

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched's ane wad think;
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigued wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side;
An' whyles twalpennnie worth o' nappy
Can mak' the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts;
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmas returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.†

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont fo'k,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha aiblins, thrang a parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
An' saying aye or no's they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or may be, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais tak's a waft,
To mak a tour, an' tak' a whirl,
To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he takes the route,
To thrum guitars, an' fecht wi' nowte;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Wh-re-hunting amang groves o' myrtles,
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak' himsel' look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction!

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!

O would they stay aback frae Courts,
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?
Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

[* The factor was the person into whose hands the affairs of Burns's father fell, after his misfortunes. In his letter to Dr. Moore, written in 1787, the Poet says, "My indignation, yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears."]

† [Many a hundred time have I seen this description verified to the letter.—ETTRICK SHEPHERD.]

It's true they needna starve nor sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An' aye the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;
An' e'en their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches;
Ae night, they're mad wi' drink and wh-ring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.

The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty:
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.
There's some exception, man an' woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan:
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men, but dogs;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

[In a letter to John Richmond, dated the 17th of February, 1786, Burns thus alludes to this highly descriptive poem:—"I have completed my poem on the Dogs, but have not shewn it to the world." Mr. Neil relates that, in a jaunt through the land of Burns, he met with Henry Cowan and Hugh his brother, who were early acquaintances of the Poet's family—members of the club, and remembered the discussion of the question regarding marriage, in which the young Poet spoke with great ardour and eloquence, and was successful. These brothers said they happened to be aiding Burns and his father with a load of wood at Coilsfield, when, in a field beside them, the Bard's collie and a collared Newfoundlander met and grew very social. Burns looked on them often, and smiled, yet said nothing: but when the poem was published, they knew to what period his thoughts had wandered.]

["The tale of the *Twa Dogs* was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had a dog, which he called Luath, that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person, the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow on his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of 'Stanzas to the Memory of a Quadruped Friend:' but this plan was given up for the poem as it now stands. Cæsar was merely the creature of the Poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite Luath."—GILBERT BURNS.]

[John Wilson, printer, Kilmarnock, on undertaking the first edition of the poems, suggested the propriety of placing a piece of a grave nature at the beginning, and Burns, acting on the hint, in walking home to Mossgiel, composed or completed the *Twa Dogs*.]

"I know of no lines in verse that flow so purely from nature as the description of the 'Twa Dogs.' That of the Newfoundland dog is altogether inimitable. One may copy some traits of nature pretty closely, but it is impossible to copy Burns. This tale was written off hand, just as the Kilmarnock edition of the poems was going to the press. *Luath* was a real character, and the bard's own dog. He is likewise a good-hearted sagacious tyke, and the characters are all along well kept up. In how different a shape Burns shows his affection for a faithful and beloved dog compared with Byron."
—ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

"The Poems of observation on life and characters are the 'Twa Dogs' and the various Epistles, all of which show very extraordinary sagacity and powers of expression."—JEFFREY.

"His 'Twa Dogs' is a very spirited piece of description, both as it respects the animal and human creation, and gives a very vivid idea of the manners both of high and low life. The burlesque panegyric of his first dog,

> 'His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
> Show'd him the gentleman and scholar:'

reminds one of Launce's account of his dog Crabbe, where he is said, as an instance of his being in the way of promotion, 'to have got among three or four gentleman-like dogs under the duke's table.'"—HAZLITT.

"The humour of Burns is of a richer vein than those of Ramsay or Fergusson, both of

whom, as he himself informs us, he had 'frequently in his eye, but rather with a view to kindle at their flame than to servile imitation.' His descriptive poems, whether the objects on which they are employed be comic or serious, animate or inanimate, are of the highest order. A superiority of this kind is essential to every species of poetical excellence. In one of his earlier poems his plan seems to be to inculcate a lesson of contentment on the lower classes of society, by showing that their superiors are neither much better nor happier than themselves; and this he chooses to execute in the form of a dialogue between two dogs. He introduces this dialogue by an account of the persons and characters of the speakers. The first, whom he had named *Cæsar*, is a dog of condition: high bred though he is, he is, however, full of condescension: the other, *Luath*, is 'a ploughman's collie;' but a cur of a good heart and a sound understanding. Never were 'Twa dogs' so exquisitely delineated. Their gambols, before they sit down to moralise, are described with an equal degree of happiness; and through the whole dialogue, the character, as well as the different condition, of the two speakers, is kept in view. The dogs of Burns, excepting in their talent for moralization, are downright dogs; and not like the horses of Swift, or the hind and panther of Dryden, men in the shape of brutes. It is this circumstance that heightens the humour of the dialogue. The 'twa dogs' are constantly kept before our eyes, and the contrast between their form and character as dogs, and the sagacity of their conversation, heighten the humour and deepen the impression of the poet's satire. Though in this poem the chief excellence may be considered as humour, yet great talents are displayed in its composition; the happiest powers of description, and the deepest insight into the human heart."—CURRIE.

To the Owl.

I.

SAD bird of night, what sorrows call thee forth,
To vent thy plaints thus in the midnight hour?
Is it some blast that gathers in the north,
Threat'ning to nip the verdure of thy bow'r?

II.

Is it, sad owl, that Autumn strips the shade,
And leaves thee here, unshelter'd & forlorn?
Or fear that Winter will thy nest invade?
Or friendless melancholy bids thee mourn?*

III.

Shut out, lone bird, from all the feather'd train,
To tell thy sorrows to th' unheeding gloom;
No friend to pity when thou dost complain,
Grief all thy thought, and solitude thy home.

IV.

Sing on, sad mourner! I will bless thy strain,
And pleas'd in sorrow listen to thy song:
Sing on, sad mourner; to the night complain,
While the lone echo wafts thy notes along.

V.

Is beauty less, when down the glowing cheek
Sad, piteous tears, in native sorrows fall?
Less kind the heart when anguish bids it break?
Less happy he who lists to pity's call?

VI.

Ah no, sad owl! nor is thy voice less sweet,
That sadness tunes it, and that grief is there;
That spring's gay notes, unskill'd, thou cans't repeat;
That sorrow bids thee to the gloom repair.

VII.

Nor that the treble songsters of the day [thee;
Are quite estrang'd, sad bird of night! from
Nor that the thrush deserts the ev'ning spray,
When darkness calls thee from thy reverie.

VIII.

From some old tow'r, thy melancholy dome,
While the grey walls, and desert solitudes,
Return each note, responsive to the gloom
Of ivied coverts and surrounding woods.

IX.

There hooting, I will list more pleas'd to thee
Than ever lover to the nightingale;
Or drooping wretch, oppress'd with misery,
Lending his ear to some condoling tale.

["Burns sometimes wrote poems in the old ballad style, which he gave to the world as songs of the olden time. That famous soldier's song first printed in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, beginning—

'Go fetch to me a pint of wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie,'

has been pronounced, by some of our best living poets, an *inimitable relique of some ancient minstrel!* Yet it was the actual production of Burns himself. The ballad of *Auld lang Syne* was also introduced in this ambiguous manner, though there exist proofs that the two best stanzas are undisputably his. Hence there are strong grounds for believing this poem also to be his production, although the name of *John M'Creddie* is stated as the author. It is in every way worthy of Burns's muse; altho' more in the style of Gray or Collins. It was found *among his MS. in his own hand-writing, with occasional interlineations, such as occur in all his primitive effusions.* Should there, however, be a real author of that name (John M'Creddie), which is extremely doubtful, he will not be displeased at the publication of his poem, when he recollects that it had obtained the notice of BURNS, and had undergone his corrections."—CROMEK.]

A period of more than five and twenty years

* In another version, also in the poet's hand-writing, it is thus rendered:
Or is it solitude that bids thee mourn?

having elapsed since Cromek penned the above note, and no one having claimed this beautiful poem, it may now go down to posterity as one of the choicest gems of the immortal Bard.

Address to Edinburgh.

I.

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

II.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labour plies!
There Architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

III.

Thy sons, Edina! social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
Or modest merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name!

IV.

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own his work indeed divine!*

V.

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold vet'ran, grey in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar:
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

VI.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Fam'd heroes! had their royal home:
Alas, how chang'd the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just!

VII.

Wild beats my heart, to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply, my sires have left their shed,
And fac'd grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

VIII.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatter'ed flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

"I enclose you two poems," says the Poet to William Chalmers, "which I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck. One blank in the Address to Edinburgh, 'Fair B—,' is the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter of Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been any thing nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence!" She will be again alluded to in a note to the Elegy on her death.

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* ["It may be curious to learn what was thought of this lovely woman by a man of a very different sort from Burns—namely, Hugh Chisholm, one of the seven "broken men" who had protected Prince Charles Stuart, in 1746, in their cave in Inverness-shire for several weeks, during his hidings, resisting the temptation of thirty thousand pounds to give him up. This man, when far advanced in life, was brought on a visit to Edinburgh, where it was remarked he would never allow any one to shake his right hand, that member having been rendered sacred, in his estimation, by the grasp of the Prince. Being taken to sup at Lord Monboddo's, old Hugh sat most of the time gazing abstractedly on Miss Burnet, and being asked afterwards what he thought of her, he exclaimed, in a burst of his eloquent native tongue, which can be but poorly rendered in English—'She is the finest creature I ever beheld.' Yet an enviously minute inquirer, in the letter-press accompanying the reprint of *Kay's Edinburgh Portraits*, states that she had one blemish, though one not apt to be observed—*bad teeth!* She died at Braid Farm, near Edinburgh in 1790, of consumption, at the age of twenty-five, and the poet, who could never forget so admirable a creature as Miss Burnet, testified the depth of his feelings on the occasion by writing an elegy to her memory."—CHAMBERS.]

["Miss Burnet," says an eloquent contemporary, "was endowed with all her father's benevolence of temper, and with all his taste for elegant literature, without his whim or caprice. It was her chief delight to be the nurse and companion of his declining years. She was the young lady alluded to in one of the papers of the Mirror, as having rejected the most flattering and advantageous opportunities of settlement in marriage, that she might amuse a father's loneliness, nurse the sickly infirmities of his age, and cheer him with all the tender cares of filial affection. Her presence contributed to draw around him, in his house, all that was truly respectable among the youth of his country. She delighted in literary conversation, in poetry, and in the fine arts, without contracting from this taste any of that pedantic self-conceit and affectation which usually characterise literary ladies." This lovely apparition was truly

——————— sent
To be a moment's ornament.]

[The appropriateness of the opening of this poem to the striking features of the Scottish capital, as seen from a little distance, must be generally acknowledged. The poem was written immediately after the Poet's arrival in that city.

The following striking lines on the same splendid scene occur in Marmion:—

"When sated with the martial show
That peopl'd all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red:
For on the smoke-wreaths huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And ting'd them with a lustre proud
Like that which streaks a thunder cloud.
Such dusky grandeur cloth'd the height
Where the huge castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Pil'd deep and massy, close and high—
Mine own romantic town!
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw,
Here Preston bay and Berwick law,
And broad between them roll'd
The gallant Firth the eye might note,
Whose islands on its blosom float
Like emeralds chas'd in gold."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

LINES
ON
Meeting with Lord Daer.*

THIS wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day!
Sae far I sprachl'd † up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drucken writers' ‡ feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests;
(Wi' rev'rence be it spoken!)
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships o' the quorum,
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord!—stand out, my shin!
A Lord—a Peer—an Earl's son!—
Up higher yet, my bonnet!
An' sic a Lord!—lang Scotch ells twa,
Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

But, oh! for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,§
An' how he star'd and stammer'd!
When goavan,|| as if led wi' branks,¶
An' stumpan on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

To meet good Stuart little pain is,
Or Scotia's sacred Demosthenes,
Thinks I, they are but men!
But Burns, my Lord—guid G-d! I doited! **
My knees on ane anither knoited,††
As faultering I gaed ben! ‡‡

I sidling shelter'd in a neuk,
An' at his lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen;
Except good sense an' social glee,
An' (what surpris'd me) modesty,
I marked nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state, that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his Lordship I shall learn
Henceforth to meet, with unconcern,
One rank as weel's another;
Nae honest, worthy man need care,
To meet wi' noble, youthful DAER,
For he but meets a brother.

[In a letter to Dr. Mackenzie, the Poet himself says of these verses, "They were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little, with the help of that partiality with which you are so good as to favour my performances." Burns has described, with infinite humour, the emotions which he felt on finding himself for the first time in the presence of a lord. His "watching the symptoms of the great," is one of his sharp touches.

"These lines," says Dr. Currie, "will be read with no common interest by all who remember his Lordship's unaffected simplicity of appearance; his sweetness of countenance and manners, and the unsuspecting benevolence of his heart." This young nobleman, at the time when he met Burns, had just returned from

* Basil, Lord Daer, son and heir apparent of Dunbar, fourth of Selkirk, died too soon for his country. He had enterprise, talents, and taste, and those winning manners which make their way to all hearts. His name was always pronounced by Dugald Stewart with affection. "The first time I saw Robert Burns," says that eloquent writer, "was on the 23rd of October, 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayr-shire. My excellent and much lamented friend, the late Basil Lord Daer, happened to arrive at Catrine the same day, and, by the kindness and frankness of his manners, left an impression on the mind of the Poet which never was effaced. The verses which the Poet wrote on the occasion are among the most imperfect of his pieces; but a few stanzas may, perhaps, be an object of curiosity, both on account of the character to which they relate, and of the light which they throw on the situation and feelings of the writer before his name was known to the public."

† Clambered. ‡ Attorneys'.

§ Frightened stare. Wild, strange, timid stare.

|| Walking stupidly. Looking round with a strange inquiring gaze. ¶ A kind of bridle.

** [This stanza was left out by Dr. Currie, no doubt by desire of the learned Professor.]

†† Knocked together. ‡‡ Was stupified.

France, where he imbibed the principles which led to the Revolution in that country. He afterwards acquired notoriety as a Friend of the people, and died, November 5th, 1794, at the age of thirty-one.]

EPISTLE

To Major Logan.*

HAIL, thairm-inspirin', rattlin' Willie!
Though fortune's road be rough an' hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
We never heed,
But tak' it like the unback'd filly,
Proud o' her speed.

When idly goavan whyles we saunter
Yirr, fancy barks, awa' we canter,
Uphill, down brae, till some mischanter,
Some black bog-hole,
Arrests us, then the scathe an' banter,
We're forc'd to thole.

Hale be your heart! hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' this wild warl',
Until you on a cummock driddle
A grey-hair'd carl.

Come wealth, come poortith, late or soon,
Heav'n send your heart-strings aye in tune,
And screw your temper-pins aboon,
A fifth or mair,
The melancholious, lazie croon
O' cankrie care!

May still your life from day to day
Nae 'lente largo' in the play,
But 'allegretto forte' gay
Harmonious flow:
A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey—
Encore! Bravo!

A' blessin's on the cheery gang,
Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
An' never think o' right an' wrang
By square an' rule,
But as the clegs o' feeling stang
Are wise or fool!

My hand-wal'd curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock, purse-proud race,
Wha count on poortith as disgrace—
Their tuneless hearts!
May fireside discords jar a base
To a' their parts!

But come—your hand, my careless brither—
I' th' ither warl', if there's anither—
An' that there is, I've little swither
About the matter,
We cheek for chow shall jog thegither,
I'se ne'er bid better.

We've faults and failings—granted clearly,
We're frail backsliding mortals merely,
Eve's bonny squad, priests wyte them sheerly,
For our grand fa';
But still—but still—I like them dearly—
God bless them a'!

Ochon! for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa' foul o' earthly jinkers,
The witching, curs'd, delicious blinkers
Hae put me hyte,
And gart me weet my waukrife winkers,
Wi' girnan spite.

But by yon moon!—and that's high swearin'—
An' every star within my hearin'!
An' by her een wha was a dear ane!†
I'll ne'er forget;
I hope to gie the jads a clearin'
In fair play yet.

My loss I mourn, but not repent it,
I'll seek my pursie whare I tint it,
Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
Some cantraip hour,
By some sweet elf I'll yet be dinted,
Then, *vive l' amour!*

Faites mes baissemains respectueuse
To sentimental sister Susie,
An' honest Lucky; no to roose ye,
Ye may be proud,
That sic a couple fate allows ye
To grace your blood.

Nae mair at present can I measure,
An' trowth my rhymin' ware's nae treasure;
But when in Ayr, some half-hour's leisure,
Be't light, be't dark,
Sir Bard will do himsel' the pleasure
To call at Park.

ROBERT BURNS.

Mossgiel, Oct. 30th, 1786.

* [Major Logan, a retired military officer, lived at Parkhouse, near Ayr, with his mother and sister—the latter, the Miss Logan to whom the Poet addressed some verses, accompanied with a copy of Beattie's Poems. The major was not only a first-rate performer on the violin, but a pleasant companion and not a little of a wit. He was a great favourite with the celebrated Neil Gow, who entertained a high opinion of his musical skill. He is still remembered in Ayrshire for his wit and humour—of which two specimens may be given. On being asked by an Ayr hostess if he would have water to the glass of spirits she was bringing to him on his order, he said, with a grin, "No, I would rather you took the water out o't!" On his death-bed he was visited by Mr. Cuthill, one of the ministers of Ayr, who remarked that it would take *fortitude* to support such sufferings as he was visited with; "Ay," said the wit, "it would take *fiftitude!*" The above Epistle was written shortly after the Poet had abandoned all idea of going to the West Indies. The original MS. was discovered in 1828, by Mrs. M'Kenzie, (late Miss Logan) in a drawer of an old cabinet, after her brother's death, where, in all probability it may have lain for the last forty years.]

† The Poet here alludes to the unfortunate termination of his courtship with Jean Armour.

The Brigs of Ayr,*

A POEM,

INSCRIBED TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ., AYR.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green-thorn bush;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-ton'd plovers, grey, wild-whistling o'er the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern misfortune's field—
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?
No! tho' his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward!
Still, if some patron's gen'rous care he trace,
Skill'd in the secret, to bestow with grace;
When Ballantyne befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The god-like bliss, to give, alone excels.

'TWAS when the stacks get on their winter-hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap;
Potatoe-bings are snugged up frae skaith
O' coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer-toils,
Unnumber'd buds, an' flow'rs' delicious† spoils,
Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils, smoor'd wi' brimstone reek:
The thund'ring guns are heard on ev'ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs,
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
Except, perhaps, the robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide-spreads the noon-tide blaze,
While thick the gossamer waves wanton in [the rays.

'Twas in that season, when a simple bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
Ae night, within the ancient burgh of Ayr,
By whim inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care,
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's‡ wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
[Or penitential pangs for former sins,
Led him to rove by quondam Merran Dins;§]
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out, || he knew not where nor why)
The drowsy Dungeon¶ clock** had number'd two,
And Wallace tow'r†† had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoll'n Firth, wi' sullen sounding roar,
Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore.
All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e:
The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.—

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
The clanging sugh of whistling wings he heard;‡‡
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
Swift as the gos§§ drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd
The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appear'd o' ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face:

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* Ayr was one of the military stations of Edward I., and the place where the hero Wallace first displayed his courage and strength. It became a royal burgh as early as 1202. The "Auld Brig" was erected in the reign of Alexander III. The "New Brig" stands about a hundred yards below the old one, and was chiefly raised by the patriotic exertions of Mr. Ballantyne, to whom the poem is inscribed. This gentleman was a bountiful friend of the poet, and offered to advance the money necessary for printing his poems, at a time when the gloom of his fortunes was at the deepest—a proposal eventually rendered unnecessary by the warm reception Burns met with in Edinburgh. Ayr gave birth to the accomplished Count Hamilton, author of the "Memoirs of Grammont." It was the residence, too, of the heroic Wallaces of Craigie, and here Cromwell constructed a fort between the town and the sea, "to keep the West in awe."

[The variations and additions (the latter now for the first time restored to the text), are taken from a MS. copy, in the poet's own hand. For these we are indebted to the new edition of Burns' Poems, in 3 vols. published by Mr. Pickering.]

† VAR.—"Flowerets nect'rine."—MS.

‡ A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.—R. B.

§ These lines are now restored from the original MS.

|| VAR.—"Forth."—MS.

¶ "Steeple."—MS.

** A clock in a steeple connected with the old jail of Ayr. This steeple and its clock were removed some years ago.

†† The clock in the Wallace Tower—an anomalous piece of antique masonry, surmounted by a spire, which stood in the High-street of Ayr. It was removed some years ago, and replaced by a more elegant tower, which bears its name.

‡‡ VAR.—"When, lo! Before our Bardie's wond'ring een,
The Brigs of Ayr's twa sprites are seen."—MS.

§§ The gos-hawk, or falcon.—R. B.

He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
Yet, teughly doure, he bade an unco bang.
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adams, got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch;—
It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e,
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid e'en:—

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na', frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheepshank,
Ance ye were streekit owre frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
Tho' faith, that date I doubt ye'll never see;
There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmeleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet—*
Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane an' lime,
Compare wi' bonnie brigs o' modern time?
There's men o' taste wou'd tak the Ducat-stream,†
Tho' they should cast the vera sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
O' sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!—
This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
I'll be a brig, when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continu'd, a'-day rains,
Wi' deep'ning deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil, [Coil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal‡ draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spotting thowes,
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
Wile crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck,§ down to the Ratton-key,‖
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea—
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, trowth, I needs must say o't!
The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves;
Windows and doors, in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream,
The craz'd creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast;
Fit only for a doited monkish race,
Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace;
Or cuifs of later times wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection!
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy Proveses, and mony a Bailie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil ay
Ye dainty Deacons and ye douce Conveeners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners!
Ye godly Councils wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly brethren o' the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gie your hurdies to the smiters;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers;
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And, agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degen'rate race!¶
Nae langer Rev'rend Men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story!
Nae langer thrifty citizens an' douse,
Meet owre a pint, or in the council-house;
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;**
Men, three parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d—d new Brigs and Harbours!

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*VAR.—These two lines were not in the original MS., but were afterwards added. The next line stands thus:
"Will your auld formless bulk o' stane an' lime."

† Noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.—R. B.

‡ The banks of Garpal Water—one of the few places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of Ghaists, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.—R. B.

§ The source of the river Ayr.—R. B.

‖ A small landing-place above the large key.—R. B.

¶ VAR.—These two lines are omitted in the MS. copy.

** VAR.—O' their.—MS.

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through,
[That's ay a string auld doyted Grey-beards harp on,
A topic for their peevishness to carp on.]*
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle:
But, under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd:
To liken them to your auld-warld squad,†
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.‡
In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can have a handle
To mouth 'a citizen,' a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit; §
[No difference but bulkiest or tallest,
With comfortable Dulness in for ballast;
Nor shoals nor currents need a Pilot's caution,
For regularly slow, they only witness motion.]||
Men wha grew wise priggin' owre hops an' raisins,
Or gather'd lib'ral views in Bonds and Seisins,
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shor'd them wi' a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common-sense for once betray'd them,
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glitt'ring stream they featly danc'd;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd:
They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling bards heroic ditties sung.—
O had M'Lauchlan,¶ thairm-inspiring Sage,
Been there to hear this heav'nly band engage,
When thro' his dear strathspeys they bore with Highland rage;
Or when they struck** old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable Chief advanc'd in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter-tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn, wreath'd with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow.
Next follow'd Courage, with his martial stride,
From where the Feal†† wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair:‡‡
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine, their long-lov'd abode: §§
Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken, iron instruments of death;
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

["The Poet composed this poem in Edinburgh for the second Edition of his works. The idea was taken from Fergusson's 'Plane Stanes and Causeway.' In the dialogue between the 'Brigs of Ayr,' Burns himself is the auditor. The Poet, 'pressed by care,' or 'inspired by whim,' had left his bed in the town of Ayr, and wandered out alone in the darkness and solitude of a winter night, to the mouth of the river, where the stillness was interrupted only by the rushing sound of the influx of the tide. It was after midnight. The Dungeon-clock had struck two, and the sound had been repeated by Wallace-tower. All else was hushed. The moon shone brightly, and

'The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.'

In this situation, the listening bard hears the 'clanging sugh,' of wings moving through the air, and speedily he perceives two beings, reared, the one on the Old, the other on the New, Bridge, whose form and attire he describes, and whose conversation with each other he rehearses. These genii enter into a comparison of the respective edifices over which they preside, and afterwards, as is usual between the old and young, compare modern characters and manners with those of past times. They differ, as maybe expected, and taunt and scold each other in broad Scotch. This humourous conversation may be considered as the proper business of the poem. Although irregular and imperfect, it

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* These two additional lines are now restored to the text from the original MS.

† VAR.—Bodies. ‡ VAR.—Odious.

§ VAR.—Nae mair down street the Council quorum waddles,
With wigs like mainsails on their logger noddles.

|| These four lines are now restored from the original MS.

¶ A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin.—R. B.

** VAR.—Touch'd.—M.S.

†† [The Poet here alludes to Captain Montgomery Coilsfield—soger Hugh—afterwards twelfth Earl of Eglintoun, whose seat of Coilsfield is situated on the Feal, or Faile, a tributary stream of the Ayr.]

‡‡ [A compliment to his early patroness, Mrs. Stuart, of Stair.]

§§ [A well-merited tribute to Professor Dugald Stewart.]

displays various and powerful talents, and may serve to illustrate the genius of Burns."—CURRIE.]

Verses to an old Sweetheart,

AFTER HER MARRIAGE.
WRITTEN
ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF HIS POEMS,
PRESENTED TO THE LADY.

ONCE fondly lov'd, and still remember'd dear;
Sweet early object of my youthful vows!
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere,—
Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple, artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him—he asks no more,—
Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

The name of the lady to whom these verses were given has not been mentioned. Burns, it is evident, had at that time no better prospect before him than emigration to the West Indies. His prose and verse of the year 1786 are filled with allusions to that reluctant step

ELEGY
ON
The Death of Robert Dundas, Esq.
OF ARNISTON,*
LATE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF SESSION.

LONE on the bleaky hills the straying flocks
Shun the fierce storms among the sheltering rocks;
Down foam the rivulets, red with dashing rains;
The gathering floods burst o'er the distant plains;
Beneath the blast the leafless forests groan;
The hollow caves return a sullen moan.

Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests, and ye caves,
Ye howling winds, and wintry-swelling waves!
Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye,
Sad, to your sympathetic scenes I fly;
Where, to the whistling blast and waters' roar
Pale Scotia's recent wound I may deplore.

O heavy loss, thy country ill could bear!
A loss these evil days can ne'er repair!
Justice, the high vicegerent of her God,
Her doubtful balance ey'd, and sway'd her rod;
She heard the tidings of the fatal blow,
And sunk, abandon'd to the wildest woe.

Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den,
Now gay in hope explore the paths of men:
See, from his cavern, grim Oppression rise,
And throw on Poverty his cruel eyes;
Keen on the helpless victim see him fly,
And stifle, dark, the feebly-bursting cry:

Mark ruffian Violence, distained with crimes,
Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
As guileful Fraud points out the erring way:
While subtile Litigation's pliant tongue
The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong:
Hark! injur'd Want recounts th' unlisten'd tale,
And much-wrong'd Mis'ry pours th' unpitied wail!

Ye dark waste hills, and brown unsightly plains,
To you I sing my grief-inspired strains:
Ye tempests, rage! ye turbid torrents, roll!
Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul.
Life's social haunts and pleasures I resign,
Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine,
To mourn the woes my country must endure,
That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

How this poem was welcomed, and what the Poet felt in consequence, he has written with his own hand under the copy of the poem which he gave to Dr. Geddes:—

"The foregoing Elegy has some tolerable lines in it, but the incurable wound of my pride will not suffer me to correct, or even peruse, it. I sent a copy of it, with my best prose letter, to the son of the great man, the theme of the piece, by the hands of one of the noblest men in God's world, Alexander Wood, surgeon. When, behold! his solicitorship took no more notice of my poem or me than I had been a strolling fiddler, who had made free with his lady's name over a silly new reel! Did the gentleman imagine that I looked for any dirty gratuity?" —BURNS.

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER
The Death of John M'Leod, Esq.
BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.

SAD thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But, cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

* Elder brother to Viscount Melville, born 1713, appointed president in 1760, and died Dec. 13, 1787, after a short illness.

† VAR.—Brother to Miss Isabella M'Leod, a particular acquaintance of the author.—BURNS'S MS.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smil'd;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That nature finest strung:
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was wrung.

Were it in the poet's power,
Strong as he shares the grief
That pierces Isabella's heart,
To give that heart relief!

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
Can heal the wound He gave;
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no with'ring blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

[The family of the M'Leods having suffered much from misfortune, Burns was deeply impressed with the bereavements they had in a short space of time endured. That he sympathised much in such distresses his works sufficiently show: some of his noblest poems—such as the Elegy on Matthew Henderson, were composed on occasions of domestic mourning.
The fifth verse has been restored from the Poet's manuscript.]

To Miss Logan,

WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS AS A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

JAN. 1, 1787.

AGAIN the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driv'n,
And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heav'n.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charg'd, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you!

[Miss Susan Logan, the lady to whom Burns presented the poems of Beattie, inscribed with these elegant lines, was the "Sentimental Sister Susie" of the Epistle to Major Logan. She lived at Park-house, and sometimes at Camlarg; sang with taste and feeling, and, with her brother, helped to cheer the Bard in many of his desponding hours.]

The American War.

A FRAGMENT.*

I.

WHEN Guilford good our pilot stood,
And did our helm thraw, man,
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the maskin'-pat,
And in the sea did jaw,† man;
An' did nae less, in full Congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

II.

Then thro' the lakes Montgomery takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man!
Down Lowrie's burn he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca', man:
But yet, what-reck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like did fa', man:
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en'mies a', man.

III.

Poor Tammy Gage, within a cage,
Was kept at Boston ha', man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man;
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian bluid to draw, man;
But at New-York, wi' knife an' fork,
Sir-loin he hacked sma', man.

IV.

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an' whip,
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In Saragota shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as long's he dought,
An' did the buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

V.

Then Montague, and Guilford too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sackville doure, wha stood the stoure,
The German chief to thraw, man;
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;
An' Charlie Fox threw by the box,
An' lows'd his tinkler jaw, man.

VI.

Then Rockingham took up the game,
Till death did on him ca', man;

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* This poem is inserted by Dr. Currie among the Songs of Burns, and headed A Fragment. Tune—*Gillicrankie*.

[† The English Parliament having imposed an excise duty upon tea imported into North America, the East India Company sent several ships laden with that article to Boston; but, on their arrival, the natives went on board by force of arms, and emptied all the tea into the ocean.]

When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
Conform to gospel law, man;
Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,
They did his measures thraw, man,
For North an' Fox united stocks,
An' bore him to the wa', man.

VII.

Then clubs an' hearts were Charlie's cartes,
He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,
Led him a sair *faux pas*, man;
The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,
On Chatham's boy did ca', man;
An' Scotland drew her pipe, an' blew,
'Up, Willie, waur them a', man!'

VIII.

Behind the throne then Grenville's gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While slee Dundas arous'd the class,
Be-north the Roman wa', man:
An' Chatham's wraith, in heav'nly graith,
(Inspired Bardies saw, man;)
Wi' kindling eyes cry'd 'Willie, rise!
'Would I hae fear'd them a', man!'

IX.

But, word an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.,
Gowff'd Willie like a ba', man,
Till Suthrons raise, an' coost their claise
Behind him in a raw, man;
An' Caledon threw by the drone,
An' did her whittle draw, man;
An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt an' bluid
To make it guid in law, man.

* * * * * *

["The page of Burns," says Campbell, "contains a lively image of contemporary life, and the country from which he sprung." Dr. Blair remarked of this poem, "Burns's politics always smell of the smithy." To understand this allusion the reader would require to be acquainted with the scene which a country smithy presents,

"When ploughmen gather wi' their graith,"

and ale, politics, and parish scandal are all alike carefully discussed. The allusions in this fragment will be generally understood. The verses are curious for the lively idea they convey of the direct and familiar manner in which high military and political matters are considered amongst the peasantry.]

The Dean of Faculty.

A NEW BALLAD.

Tune.—"*The Dragon of Wantley.*"

I.

DIRE was the hate at old Harlaw,
That Scot to Scot did carry;
And dire the discord Langside saw,
For beauteous, hapless Mary:
But Scot with Scot ne'er met so hot,
Or were more in fury seen, Sir,
Than 'twixt Hal* and Bob† for the famous job—
Who should be Faculty's Dean, Sir.—

II.

This Hal for genius, wit, and lore,
Among the first was numbered;
But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store,
Commandment tenth remember'd.—
Yet simple Bob the victory got,
And won his heart's desire;
Which shews that heaven can boil the pot,
Though the devil — in the fire.—

III.

Squire Hal besides had, in this case,
Pretensions rather brassy,
For talents to deserve a place
Are qualifications saucy;
So, their worships of the Faculty,
Quite sick of merit's rudeness,
Chose one who should owe it all, d'ye see,
To their gratis grace and goodness.—

IV.

As once on Pisgah purg'd was the sight
Of a son of Circumcision,
So may be, on this Pisgah height,
Bob's purblind, mental vision:
Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear he has the Angel met
That met the Ass of Balaam.

V.

[In your heretic sins may ye live, and die,
Ye heretic eight and thirty!
But accept, ye sublime Majority,
My congratulations hearty.
With your Honours and a certain King,
In your servants this is striking—
The more incapacity they bring,
The more they're to your liking.‡]

["The Hon. Henry Erskine was elected Dean of the Faculty of Advocates in 1786, and unanimously re-elected every year till 1796, when it was resolved by some members of the Tory party, at the Scottish bar, to oppose his re-election, in consideration of his having aided in getting up a petition against the passing of the well-known sedition bills. Mr. Erskine's appearance at the Circus (now the Adelphi Theatre) on that occasion was designated by those gentlemen (among whom were Charles Hope and David Boyle, now respectively Lord President and Lord Justice-Clerk,) as "agitating the giddy and ignorant multitude, and cherishing such humours and dispositions as directly tend to overturn the laws." They brought forward Mr. Robert Dundas of Arniston, Lord Advocate, in opposition to Mr. Erskine; and at the election, January 12, 1796,

* The Hon. Henry Erskine.
† Robert Dundas, Esq. Arniston.

‡ [This additional stanza is now restored from the original MS. in the Poet's own hand-writing.]

the former gained the day by 123 against 38 votes. The above verses by Burns describe the keenness of the contest. The mortification of the displaced dean was so extreme that he that evening, with a coal-axe, hewed off, from his door in Prince's Street, a brass-plate on which his designation as Dean of Faculty was inscribed. It is not impossible that, in characterising Mr. Dundas so opprobriously, and we may add unjustly, Burns might recollect the slight with which his elegiac verses on the father of that gentleman had been treated eight years before." —CHAMBERS.]

[The poem was first published in the Reliques of Burns. It explains itself. It was any thing but graciously received by the two competitors, Hal and Bob.]

To Clarinda.*

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING-GLASSES.

FAIR Empress of the Poet's soul,
And Queen of Poetesses;
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses,—

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge me in the generous toast—
"The whole of human kind!"

"To those who love us!"—second fill;
But not to those whom we love;
Lest we love those who love not us!—
A third—"to thee and me, love!"

[Long may we live! long may we love!
And long may we be happy!
And may we never want a glass,
Well charg'd with generous nappy! †]

* Of the numerous fair dames who were the objects of Burns's admiration, none were more distinguished than the beautiful Clarinda. The maiden name of this lady was Agnes Craig, a cousin of the late Lord Craig, one of the Lords of Session in Scotland. She made the poet's acquaintance in Edinburgh in the winter of 1787, and was then the wife of Mr. M'Lehose. A Platonic attachment ensued—the result was the series of eloquent prose letters, which he addressed to this celebrated lady. Clarinda still lives (1840) at the advanced age of eighty-two. Besides great personal attractions Mrs. M'Lehose was an ardent follower of the muses, and Burns thus alludes to one of her productions:—"Your last verses to me have so delighted me that I have got an excellent old Scots air that suits the measure, and you shall see them in print in the Scots' Musical Museum, a work publishing by a friend of mine in this town. The air is *The Banks of Spey*, and is most beautiful. I want four stanzas—you gave me but three, and one of them alluded to an expression in my former letter: so I have taken your first two verses, with a slight alteration in the second, and have added a third; but you must help me to a fourth. Here they are; the latter half of the first stanza would have been worthy of Sappho; I am in raptures with it:—

Talk not of Love, it gives me pain,
For love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain,
And plung'd me deep in woe.

But friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was form'd to prove—
There, welcome, win, and wear the prize,
But never talk of Love.

Your Friendship much can make be blest,
Oh! why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the odious [only] one request
You know I must [will] deny?

PS. What would you think of this for a fourth Stanza?

Your thought, if Love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought;
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.

These verses are inserted in the second volume of the Musical Museum.

† [From the original MS. in Burns's own hand, this additional verse is given.]

To the same.

ON THE POET'S LEAVING EDINBURGH.

CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
The measur'd time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie;—
Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy?

We part—but, by these precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

The bard had recovered from his fall, and was contemplating his departure from Edinburgh, when he wrote these verses to "Clarinda." "I enclose you," says he, "a few lines I composed on a late melancholy occasion. I will not give above five or six copies of them in all, and I would be hurt if any friend should give away copies without my consent." He sent her a copy of the sketch which he gave of himself to Dr. Moore, and added, "I do not know if you have a just idea of my character; but I wish you to see me, *as I am*. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange will-o'-wisp being; the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My two great constituent elements are pride and passion: the first I have endeavoured to humanize into integrity and honour; the last makes me a devotee to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion, or friendship—either of them, or altogether, as I happen to be inspired.

"Devotion is the favourite employment of your heart; so is it of mine: what incentives then to, and powers for, reverence, gratitude, faith, and hope, in all the fervours of adoration and praise to that Being, whose unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, so pervaded, so inspired, every sense and feeling!

"What a strange mysterious faculty is that thing called imagination! We have no ideas almost at all, of another world; but I have often amused myself with visionary schemes of what happiness might be enjoyed by small alterations—alterations that we can fully enter into, in this present state of existence. For instance, suppose you and I, just as we are at present—the same reasoning powers, sentiments, and even desires; the same fond curiosity for knowledge and remarking observation in our minds; and imagine our bodies free from pain, and the necessary supplies for the wants of nature, at all times, and easily within our reach: imagine, farther, that we were set free from the laws of gravitation which bind us to this globe, and could at pleasure fly, without inconvenience, through all the yet unconjectured bounds of creation—what a life of bliss would we lead in our mutual pursuit of virtue and knowledge, and our mutual enjoyment of friendship and love!

"I see you laughing at my fairy fancies, and calling me a voluptuous Mahometan, but I am certain I would be a happy creature, beyond anything we call bliss here below; nay, it would be a paradise congenial to you, too. Don't you see us, hand-in-hand, or rather, my arm about your lovely waist, making our remarks on Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars; or surveying a Comet, flaming innoxious by us, as we just now would mark the passing pomp of a travelling monarch, or in a shady bower of Mercury or Venus, dedicating the hour to love, in mutual converse, relying honour, and revelling endearment, while the most exalted strains of poesy and harmony would be the ready and spontaneous language of our souls?"—BURNS.

To the same.

"I BURN, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd corn,
By driving winds the crackling flames are borne!"
Now madd'ning, wild, I curse that fatal night;
Now bless the hour which charm'd my guilty sight.
In vain the laws their feeble force oppose;
Chain'd at his feet they groan, Love's vanquish'd foes:
In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye;
I dare not combat—but I turn and fly:
Conscience in vain upbraids th' unhallow'd fire;
Love grasps his scorpions—stifl'd they expire;
Reason drops headlong from his sacred throne,
Your dear idea reigns, and reigns alone:
Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
And riots wanton in forbidden fields!

By all on High adoring mortals know!
By all the conscious villain fears below!
By your dear self!—the last great oath I swear;
Nor life nor soul were ever half so dear!

[The above impassioned Lines were written in 1788, during the period of the Poet's celebrated Correspondence with Clarinda, and appear in one of his letters to that lady.]

To the same.

BEFORE I saw Clarinda's face,
My heart was blythe and gay,
Free as the wind, or feather'd race
That hop from spray to spray.

But now dejected I appear,
Clarinda proves unkind;
I, sighing, drop the silent tear,
But no relief can find.

In plaintive notes my tale rehearses
When I the fair have found;
On every tree appear my verses
That to her praise resound.

But she, ungrateful, shuns my sight,
My faithful love disdains,
My vows and tears her scorn excite,
Another happy reigns.

Ah, though my looks betray,
I envy your success;
Yet love to friendship shall give way,
I cannot wish it less.

Verses

WRITTEN UNDER THE PORTRAIT OF FERGUSSON, THE POET, IN A COPY OF THAT AUTHOR'S WORKS PRESENTED TO A YOUNG LADY IN EDINBURGH, MARCH 19TH, 1787.

CURSE on ungrateful man, that can be pleas'd,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure!
O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

[This apostrophe to Fergusson bears a striking affinity to one in the "Epistle to William Simpson." It was written before Burns visited the Scottish capital. Even without a poet's susceptibility, we may feel how this prophetic parallel of Fergusson's case with his own must have pressed on the memory of our bard, when he paid this second tribute of affection to his "elder brother in misfortune."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Prologue

SPOKEN BY MR. WOODS * ON HIS BENEFIT NIGHT. MONDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1787.

WHEN by a generous Public's kind acclaim,
That dearest meed is granted—honest fame:
When here your favour is the actor's lot,
Nor even the man in private life forgot;
What breast so dead to heav'nly Virtue's glow,
But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barb'rous throng,
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song;
But here an ancient nation fam'd afar,
For genius, learning high, as great in war—
Hail, CALEDONIA! name for ever dear!
Before whose sons I'm honour'd to appear!
Where every science—every nobler art—
That can inform the mind, or mend the heart,
Is known; as grateful nations oft have found,
Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound.
Philosophy, no idle, pedant dream, [son's beam;
Here holds her search by heaven-taught Rea-
Here History paints with elegance and force,
The tide of Empire's fluctuating course;
Here Douglas forms wild Shakspeare into plan,
And Harley † rouses all the God in man,
When well-form'd taste, and sparkling wit, unite
With manly lore, or female beauty bright,
(Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace,
Can only charm us in the second place,)
Witness my heart, how oft with panting fear,
As on this night, I've met these judges here!
But still the hope Experience taught to live,
Equal to judge—you're candid to forgive.
No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
With decency and law beneath his feet;
Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name;
Like CALEDONIANS, you applaud or blame.

O Thou, dread Power! whose empire-giving hand [land!
Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honour'd
Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire!
May every son be worthy of his sire!
Firm may she rise with generous disdain
At Tyranny's, or direr Pleasure's, chain!
Still self-dependent in her native shore,
Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
Till fate the curtain drop on worlds to be no more.

To the Guidwife of Wauchope House,

[MRS. SCOTT, OF WAUCHOPE.]

GUIDWIFE,
I MIND it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn
Or haud a yokin' at the pleugh;
An' tho' forfoughten sair enough,
Yet unco proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
An' wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,
Still shearing, and clearing,
The tither stooked raw,
Wi' claivers, an' haivers,
Wearing the day awa.

Ev'n then, a wish (I mind its pow'r),
A wish, that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast—
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeding-heuk aside,
An' spar'd the symbol dear:
No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise,
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
'Till on that hairst I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonsie quean,
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een
That gart my heart-strings tingle!
I fired, inspired,
At every kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I feared aye to speak.

Health to the sex! ilk guid chiel says,
Wi' merry dance in winter-days,
An' we to share in common:
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heav'n below,
Is rapture-giving woman.
Ye surly sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither:
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye're connected with her,
Ye're wae men, ye're nae men
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie swears.

* [Mr. Woods had been the friend of Fergusson. He was long a favourite actor in Edinburgh, and was himself a man of some poetical talent. He died at his house on the Terrace, Edinburgh, December 14, 1802. This Prologue first appeared in the Glasgow edition of Burns's Poems, published in 1801. Burns was well known to Mr. Woods. In describing "May Eve, or Kate of Aberdeen," in his Remarks on Scottish Song, Burns relates an anecdote of Cunningham, the Actor: adding, "*This Mr. Woods, the Player*, who knew Cunningham well, and esteemed him much, assured *me was true.*"]

† Henry Mackenzie, in "The Man of Feeling."

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line:
The marled plaid ye kindly spare
By me should gratefully be ware;
'Twad please me to the Nine.
I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin' owre my curple,
Than ony ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.
Fareweel then, lang heal then,
An' plenty be your fa':
May losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan ca'.

March, 1787.

"Oh! that he, the prevailing poet," says a kindred spirit, speaking of the aspirations of his youth, "could have seen this light breaking in upon the darkness that did too long and too deeply overshadow his living lot! Some glorious glimpses of it his prophetic soul did see—witness 'The Vision,' or that somewhat humbler, but yet high, strain—in which, bethinking him of the undefined aspirations of his boyish genius that had bestirred itself in the darkness, as if the touch of an angel's hand were to awaken a sleeper in his cell—he said to himself:—

'Ev'n then a wish, (I mind its pow'r,)
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan, or beuk, could make,
Or sing a sang at least.'

"Such hopes were in him, in his 'bright and shining youth,' surrounded as it was with toil and trouble, that could not bend down the brow of Burns from its natural upright inclination to the sky: and such hopes, let us doubt it not, were with him in his dark and faded prime, when life's lamp burned low indeed, and he was willing at last, early as it was, to shut his eyes on this dearly beloved, but sorely distracting, world."—PROFESSOR WILSON.

The lady to whom this epistle is addressed was endowed with taste and talent. She was a painter and poetess: her sketches with the pencil were very beautiful; of her skill in verse the reader may judge from the following:—

THE GUDEWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE,
TO ROBERT BURNS, THE AYR-SHIRE BARD.
Feb. 1787

"My cantie, witty, rhyming ploughman,
I hafflins doubt, it is na true, man,
That ye between the stilts was bred,
Wi' ploughmen school'd, wi' ploughmen fed;
I doubt it sair, ye've drawn your knowledge
Either frae grammar-school, or college.
Guid troth, your saul an' body baith
War' better fed, I'd gie my aith,
Than theirs, who sup sour milk an' parritch,
An' bummil through the single Carritch
Whaever heard the ploughman speak,
Could tell gif Homer was a Greek?
He'd flee as soon upon a cudgel,
As get a single line of Virgil.
An' then sae slee ye crack your jokes
O' Willie Pitt and Charlie Fox:
Our great men a' sae weel descrive,
An' how to gar the nation thrive,
Ane maist wad swear ye dwalt amang them,
And as ye saw them, sae ye sang them.
But be ye ploughman, be ye peer,
Ye are a funny blade, I swear;
An' though the cauld I ill can bide,
Yet twenty miles an' mair I'd ride,
O'er moss an' muir, an' never grumble,
Though my auld yad should gie a stumble,
To crack a winter-night wi' thee,
An' hear thy sangs an' sonnets slee.
A guid saut herring, an' a cake,
Wi' sic a chiel, a feast wad make,
I'd rather scour your rumming yill,
Or eat o' bread and cheese my fill,
Than, wi' dull lairds, on turtle dine,
An' ferlie at their wit and wine.
O, gif I kenn'd but whare ye baide,
I'd send to you a marled plaid;
'Twad haud your shouthers warm an' braw,
An' douce at kirk, or market shaw;
Far south, as weel as north, my lad,
A' honest Scotsmen lo'e the maud.
Right wae that we're sae far frae ither;
Yet proud I am to ca' ye brither.
Your most obedient, E. S."

Mrs. Scott of Wauchope was niece to Mrs. Cockburn, authoress of a beautiful variation of "The Flowers of the Forest."

Epistle to William Creech,*

WRITTEN AT SELKIRK.

AULD chuckie Reekie's† sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel-burnisht crest,
Nae joy her bonnie buskit nest
Can yield ava,
Her darling bird that she lo'es best,
Willie's awa!

---

* [The eminent bookseller to whom this epistle is addressed was a very singular person: he was the son of the minister of Newbattle, and, by his mother, connected with a noble family in Devonshire. He was a good classical scholar; was educated for the medical profession, but finally resolving to be a bookseller, apprenticed himself to Kincaid of Edinburgh. He forsook, however, the business for a time, and went on a tour to the continent, with Lord Kilmaurs, afterwards Earl of Glencairn. On his return, he became partner with Kincaid, who soon retired, leaving Creech in sole possession of the business, which he carried on for forty-four years with great success. He was not only the most popular bookseller in the north, but he published the writings of almost all the distinguished men who adorned Scottish literature towards the close of the eighteenth century. His shop occupied a conspicuous place in the centre of the Old Town, and it was his pleasure to give breakfasts to his authors: these meetings were called Creech's levees. Burns enumerates, as attending them, Dr. James Gregory, Tytler, of Woodhouselee, Dr. William Greenfield, Henry Mackenzie, and Dugald Stewart. He not only encouraged authors, but he wrote prose himself; he published a volume of trifles under the name of "Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces," which was reprinted in 1815.

"Mr. Creech's style of composition," says Robert Cham-

† Edinburgh.

O Willie was a witty wight,
And had o' things an unco slight;
Auld Reekie aye he keepit tight,
An' trig an' braw:
But now they'll busk her like a fright,
Willie's awa!

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd;
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa!

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks, and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding-schools,
May spout like simmer puddock-stools
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools,
Willie's awa!

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chaumer*
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a';
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer
Willie's awa!

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and poets pour,
And toothy critics by the score,
In bloody raw!
The adjutant o' a' the core,
Willie's awa!

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace;
Mackenzie, Stewart, sic a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' maun meet some ither place,
Willie's awa!

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken,
Scar'd frae its minnie and the cleckin
By hoodie-craw;
Grief's gi'en his heart an unco kickin',
Willie's awa!

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd girnin' blellum,
And Calvin's fock, are fit to fell him;
And self-conceited critic skellum
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawlie ward their bellum,
Willie's awa!

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on chrystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
While tempests blaw; †
But every joy and pleasure's fled,
Willie's awa!

May I be slander's common speech;
A text for infamy to preach;
And lastly, streekit out to bleach
In winter snaw;
When I forget thee, Willie Creech,
Tho' far awa!

May never wicked fortune touzle him!
May never wicked men bamboozle him!
Until a pow as auld's Methusalem
He canty claw!
Then to the blessed New Jerusalem,
Fleet wing awa!

[The "Epistle to William Creech" was the sole poetic fruit of the Border tour of Burns. It was written May 13, 1787, and accompanied with the following letter:—"My honoured friend—The enclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary inn at Selkirk, after a miserable wet day's riding. I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirk-shires; and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday I dined with Lady Harriet, sister to my noble patron [James, Earl of Glencairn] *Quem Deus conservet!* I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose as, I dare say, by this time you are with wretched verse, but I am jaded to death; so with a grateful farewell, I have the honour to be, good sir, yours sincerely, —R. B."]

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bers, in his valuable 'Scottish Biography,' "is only worthy of being spoken of with respect to its ironical humour. In private life he shone conspicuously as a pleasant companion and conversationist, being possessed of an inexhaustible fund of droll anecdote, which he could narrate in a characteristic manner, and with unfailing effect. He thus secured general esteem, in despite, it appeared, of extraordinary fondness for money and penuriousness of habits, which acted to the preclusion, not only of all benevolence of disposition, but even of the common honesty of discharging his obligations where they were due." In these concluding words the secret of the long abode of Burns in Edinburgh is explained, and also some passages in his letters expressing doubt and apprehension. Creech would not part with the money due to the poet on his works, and the poet could not enter into farming speculations with an empty pocket.

"Mr. Creech more than once filled the chair of Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and is noted as the only person who ever saved money out of the salary then attached to the office. With reference to his penurious bachelorly habits, a native caricaturist once set the town in a roar by depicting, in connection, the respective kitchens of the chief magistrates of London and Edinburgh, the former exhibiting every appearance of plenty that could be expected in a large and munificent establishment, and the latter displaying a poor old pinched housekeeper spinning beside a narrow fireplace, where the cat was perched for warmth upon a gathering coal. Mr. Creech died in 1815, at the age of seventy."]—CHAMBERS.

* [The Chamber of Commerce at Edinburgh, of which Creech was Secretary.

† [Dr. Clarkson used to relate, with a heavy heart, that when Burns, and his fellow-traveller, Mr. Ainslie, arrived at Selkirk, that evening, "they were just like twa droukit craws." The doctor and two other gentlemen were sitting in Veitch's Inn, near the West Port, taking their glass (for Selkirk has a West Port as well as Edinburgh). When the travellers arrived, the two within viewed them out at the window as they alighted, and certainly conceived no very high opinion of them. In a short time, however, they sent Mr. Veitch in to the doctor and his friends, requesting permission for two strangers to take a glass with them. The doctor objected; and asked Mr. Veitch what the men were like? Mr. Veitch said, he could not well say: the one spoke *rather* like a gentleman, but the other was a drover-looking chap; so they refused to admit them, sending them word ben the house that they were sorry they were engaged elsewhere, and obliged to go away. The doctor saw them ride off next morning, and it was not till the third day that he knew it had been the celebrated Scottish poet whom they had refused to admit. That refusal hangs about the doctor's heart like a dead weight to this day, and will do to the day of his death, for the Bard had not a more enthusiastic admirer."—HOGG.]

The Hermit. *

WRITTEN ON A MARBLE SIDEBOARD,
IN THE HERMITAGE BELONGING TO THE DUKE OF ATHOLE,
IN THE WOOD OF ABERFELDY.

Whoe'er thou art, these lines now reading,
Think not, though from the world receding,
I joy my lonely days to lead in
This desert drear;
That fell remorse a conscience bleeding
Hath led me here.

No thought of guilt my bosom sours;
Free-will'd I fled from courtly bowers;
For well I saw in halls and towers
That lust and pride,
The arch-fiend's dearest, darkest powers,
In state preside.

I saw mankind with vice encrusted;
I saw that honour's sword was rusted;
That few for aught but folly lusted;
That he was still deceiv'd who trusted
To love or friend;
And hither came, with men disgusted,
My life to end.

In this lone cave, in garments lowly,
Alike a foe to noisy folly,
And brow-bent gloomy melancholy,
I wear away
My life, and in my office holy
Consume the day.

This rock my shield, when storms are blowing,
The limpid streamlet yonder flowing
Supplying drink, the earth bestowing
My simple food;
But few enjoy the calm I know in
This desert wood.

Content and comfort bless me more in
This grot than e'er I felt before in
A palace—and with thoughts still soaring
To God on high,
Each night and morn with voice imploring,
This wish I sigh:—

"Let me, O Lord! from life retire,
Unknown each guilty worldly fire,
Remorse's throb, or loose desire;
And when I die,
Let me in this belief expire—
To God I fly."

Stranger, if full of youth and riot,
And yet no grief has marr'd thy quiet,
Thou haply throw'st a scornful eye at
The hermit's prayer;
But if thou hast good cause to sigh at
Thy fault or care;

If thou hast known false love's vexation,
Or hast been exiled from thy nation,
Or guilt affrights thy contemplation,
And makes thee pine,
Oh! how must thou lament thy station,
And envy mine!

The Humble Petition of Bruar Water.†

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

I.

My Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-with'ring, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

II.

The lightly-jumpin', glowrin' trouts,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left, the whit'ning stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

III.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As Poet Burns came by,
That, to a bard, I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was he shor'd me;

* [This beautiful poem first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the Poet's works, on the authority of Mr. Peter Buchan, Aberdeen. It had previously been published fugitively, and there is no doubt of its authenticity. It also appears in Mr. Robert Chambers's Edition.]

† Bruar Falls, in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs.—R. B.

["The first object of interest that occurs upon the public road, after leaving Blair, is a chasm in the hill on the right hand, through which the river Bruar falls over a series of beautiful cascades. Formerly, the falls of the Bruar were unadorned by wood; but the Poet Burns, being conducted to see them by his friend the Duke of Athole, recommended that they should be invested with that necessary decoration—a plantation. Trees have accordingly been thickly planted along the chasm, and are now far advanced to maturity. Throughout this young forest, a walk has been cut, and a number of fantastic little grottoes erected for the convenience of those who visit the spot. The river not only makes several distinct falls, but rushes on through a channel, whose roughness and haggard sublimity adds greatly to the merits of the scene, as an object of interest among tourists."—Chambers.]

["Burns passed two or three days with the Duke of Athole, and was highly delighted by the attention he received, and the company to whom he was introduced. These, on the other hand, were no less pleased with the correct and manly deportment of the interesting stranger. As the hour of supper was distant, he begged I would guide him through the grounds. It was already growing dark; yet the softened, though faint and uncertain, view of their beauties which the moonlight afforded us, seemed exactly suited to the state of his feelings at the time. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, he threw himself on the heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. By the Duke's advice he visited the Falls of Bruar, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness, with the above verses inclosed."—Professor Walker.]

But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

IV.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well,
As nature gave them me,
I am, altho' I say't mysel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

V.

Would then my noblest master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

VI.

The sober lav'rock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink,* music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

VII.

This, too, a covert shall insure,
To shield them from the storms;
And coward maukins sleep secure,
Low in their grassy forms:
The shepherd here shall make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow'rs;
Or find a shelt'ring safe retreat,
From prone descending show'rs.

VIII.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds, with all their wealth,
As empty idle care.
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

IX.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain, grey;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequ'ring thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly-dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

X.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

XI.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lasses!"

On Scaring some Water-Fowl

IN LOCH-TURIT,

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OCHTERTYRE.†

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunts forsake?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:
Plumes himself in freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels:
But man, to whom alone is giv'n
A ray direct from pitying heav'n,

* VAR. The bairdie.—MS.

† [The Poet visited Ochtertyre and Loch-Turit in the company of Nicol, during his third northern tour. He was staying, when he wrote these touching lines, with Sir William Murray of Ochtertyre. Other inspirations came upon him. He met Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, commonly called "The Flower of Strathmore," and celebrated her beauty in that fine lyric beginning—

"Blythe, blythe, an' merry was she,
Blythe was she, but and ben;
Blythe by the banks of Ern,
And blyther in Glenturit Glen."

"The house of Ochtertyre is little and over-neat; but its situation on an eminence starting from the face of a hill, and its glorious park, and lake, and trees, and all its sunny loveliness, render it, nevertheless, one of the most delightful seats in broad Scotland. It has been spoken of in terms of rapture by all literary travellers, including Burns, who spent some time here, and has rendered the adjacent vale of the Turit altogether classical by his glowing pen."—CHAMBERS.]

Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand'ring swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays,
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his pow'rs you scorn;
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave
Scorn at least to be his slave.

LINES

Written with a Pencil,

OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
'Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view.—*
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild scatter'd, clothe their ample sides; [hills,
Th' outstretching lake, embosomed 'mong the
The eye with wonder † and amazement fills;
The Tay, meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
The palace, rising on its verdant side; [taste;
The lawns, wood-fring'd in Nature's native
The hillocks, dropt in Nature's careless haste;‡
The arches, striding o'er the new-born stream;
The village, glitt'ring in the noon-tide beam—

* * * *

Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
Th' incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

* * * *

Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
And look through Nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of Fate half-reconcil'd,
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter—rankling wounds: [stretch her scan,
Here heart-struck Grief might heav'n-ward
And injur'd Worth forget and pardon man.

* * * *

LINES

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,

Standing by the Fall of Fyers, §

NEAR LOCH-NESS

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods,
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds, [sounds,
Where, thro' a shapeless breach, his stream re-

* [Burns, like all travellers of taste, was struck with the magnificent scene, of which the splendid castle of the Earl of Breadalbane can scarcely be called the chief attraction.—"The house," says Chambers, "is after the fashion of Inverary, with circular turrets at the corners, and a minor tower rising prominent above, together with several additional portions of less altitude, though equally beautiful architecture. It contains one of the best collections of pictures in Scotland." Among the pictures are many of the portraits of Jameson. The vale is bounded by lofty, abrupt, and finely wooded hills, and, though not spacious enough to admit a well-laid lawn and park, such as adorn the baronial residences of the south, yet the stream, and vale, and upland, unite in forming a landscape wondrous for its picturesque beauty. The surface of the ground is always green, and the hoary trees are of great antiquity and size.

The images contained in these lines are worthy of a painter, and show that Burns had a fine eye for what was striking and lovely. In his journal the poet simply says, "Taymouth described in rhyme," and well has he pourtrayed this beautiful scene. "Some of these verses," says Lockhart, "are among his best purely English heroics."]

† VAR Pleasure.—MS.

‡ VAR. Nor with one single goth-conceit, disgrac'd.—MS.

§ [Those who wish to see the Fall of Fyers in its true Highland glory should go, after two days' rain upon the uplands has swollen the stream and filled up the channel, till the banks are all but overflowing. Then, those who have seen some of the finest cascades in foreign parts as well as in Britain, declare that, save the falls of Terni, no other can be compared, for romantic beauty, with those of Fyers.—"In its medium fulness," observes Chambers, "it pours through a narrow gullet in the rock in a round unbroken stream, which gradually whitens as it descends, till it falls into a half-seen profound, upwards of two hundred feet below the point of descent. About a quarter of a mile further up the ravine, there is another cascade, usually called the Upper fall—a fearful gulph, down which the water descends by three leaps, and over which a mean-looking bridge has been thrown, by way of station for a sight of the cataract." These falls are but a short distance from Inverness.

The following description of the same scenery, in a storm, is by the hand of a master:—

"Here is solitude with a vengeance—stern grim dungeon solitude! How ghostlike those white skeleton pines, stripped of their rhind by tempest and lightning, and dead to the din of the raging cauldron! That cataract, if descending on a cathedral, would shatter down the pile into a million of fragments. But it meets the black foundations of the cliff, and flies up to the starless heaven in a storm of spray. We are drenched, as if leaning in a hurricane over the gunwale of a ship rolling under bare poles, through a heavy sea. The very solid globe of earth quakes through her entrails. The eye, reconciled to the darkness, now sees a glimmering and gloomy light—and lo, a bridge of a single arch hung across the chasm just high enough to let through the triumphant torrent. Has some hill-loch burst its barrier? For what a world of waters comes now tumbling into the abyss! Niagara! hast thou a fiercer roar? Listen—and you think there are momentary pauses of the thunder, filled up with goblin groans! All the military music bands of the army of Britain would here be dumb as mutes—trumpet, cymbal, and the great drum! There is a desperate temptation in the hubbub to leap into destruction. Water horses and kelpies, keep stabled in your rock stalls—for if you issue forth, the river will sweep you down before you have finished one neigh, to Castle Urquhart, and dash you on a sheet of foam to the top of her rocking battlements. A pretty place indeed for a lunar rainbow! But the moon has been swept away from heaven, and no brightness may tinge the black firmament that midnight builds over the liquid thunder. What a glorious grave for the last Man! a grave without a resurrection! Oh Nature! Nature! art thou all in all? And is there no God? The astounded spirit shrinks from superstition into atheism—and all creeds

As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep-recoiling surges foam below, [cends,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet des-
And viewless Echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.
Dim seen through rising mists and ceaseless show'rs,
The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, low'rs.
Still, thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
And still, below, the horrid cauldron boils—

* * * * *

POETICAL ADDRESS

TO

Mr. William Tytler,*

WITH A PRESENT OF THE BARD'S PICTURE.

Edinburgh, 1787.

Revered defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,—
A name which to love was the mark of a true
But now 'tis despis'd and neglected. [heart,

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my
Let no one misdeem me disloyal; [eye,
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim a
Still more, if that wand'rer were royal. [sigh,

My fathers that name have rever'd on a throne;
My fathers have fallen† to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily
The Queen, and the rest of the gentry, [join,
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of this epocha make such a fuss,
That gave us the Hanover‡ stem;
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I'm sure 'twas as lucky for them.§

But, loyalty, truce! we're on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine to-day that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care:
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

LINES

Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage,

ON THE BANKS OF NITH.

[FIRST COPY.]‖

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
'Grave these maxims on thy soul:—

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Day, how rapid in its flight—
Day, how few must see the night;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

---

are dashed into oblivion, by the appalling war. But a still small voice is heard within the heart—the voice of conscience—and its whisperings shall be heard, when all the waters of the earth are frozen into nothing, and the earth itself shrivelled up like a scroll!"—Professor Wilson.]

* [William Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee to whom these lines are addressed, wrote, as the verses intimate, an elegant and elaborate defence of Mary Queen of Scots, which dispersed a little the dark cloud of calumny which had hung for centuries over her head. His son is well known, in Scottish law and literature, by the title of Lord Woodhouselee; his taste in poetry was of the first order, nor was he unskilful in music: he is placed by Lord Byron at the head of the Scottish literati of that period. His grandson, Patrick Fraser Tytler, is still more distinguished: his Biographies of eminent Scotsmen are full of research and new intelligence; but his chief work is his "History of Scotland," which surpasses all other works on the subject for accuracy, and equals the best of them in eloquence of narrative and true delineation of character.

In the letter enclosing these stanzas, Burns says, "My muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me, and I have not got again into her good graces." The father of William Tytler, who was from Aberdeen, inherited much of the Highland love for our old line of princes. The margins of his books bore evidence of his regard for the "line of Bruce." The feeling is not yet quite extinct: When George IV. left Edinburgh, and the songs in his praise had ceased, a Highland piper ventured out, and playing up "Ye're welcome, Charlie Stuart!" was much cheered by the crowd, who soon bought up his ballads.]

† Var. Died.—MS. in Burns's own writing, and altered apparently by Mr. Tytler.

‡ Var. Electoral, in Burns's own hand, but altered by Mr. Tytler into Hanover.

§ Through the kindness of Patrick Fraser Tytler, Esq. these three lines are now restored to the text. They were omitted by Dr. Currie, but they seem harmless enough, and the royal stock to which they refer would have smiled at them.

‖ ["The kindness of my friend Mrs. Hyslop has enabled me to give, from the interleaved volume which belonged to Dr. Geddes, the original rough draught of this poem. It is seldom, indeed, that Burns bestowed so much labour on his compositions: he thought so well, however, of this, that he preserved the variations, as eminent painters preserve the first and second thoughts of their best pictures. He wrote the first version in June, 1783: the amended and enlarged copy follows, in the manuscript, with this heading—"Altered from the foregoing. December, 1788." Some of the changes are curious, and will be felt by the reader. Had the poem been in his native dialect, it would have come full and finished from his fancy; his sentiments, when he wrote in the Scottish language, put on at once their proper costume of words, and he had few changes to make. So highly did the Poet think of this poem that he wrote out many copies, and forwarded them to his friends—a number of these are still in existence. He looked upon it as an attempt to rise out of rustic Scotch into classic English; the gentle praise bestowed showed him what was felt—that he had not equalled the happiness of expression in some of his earlier pieces."—Allan Cunningham.]

Happiness is but a name,
Make content and ease thy aim
Ambition is a meteor gleam;
Fame an idle * restless dream:
Pleasures, insects on the wing
Round Peace, the tend'rest flower of Spring! †
Those that sip the dew alone,
Make the butterflies thy ‡ own;
Those that would the bloom devour,
Crush the locusts—save the flower.
For the future be prepar'd,
Guard whatever thou can'st guard;
But thy utmost duly § done,
Welcome what thou can'st not shun.
Follies past give thou to air,
Make their consequence thy care:
Keep the name of man in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind.
Reverence, with lowly heart,
Him whose wondrous work thou art;
Keep His goodness still in view,
Thy Trust—and thy Example, too.

Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide;
Quoth the Beadsman on Nithside

Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage, ‖

ON NITHSIDE.

[SECOND COPY.]

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
'Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

As Youth and Love, with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning-star advance,
Pleasure, with her siren air,
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits would'st thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful Peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As Life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-neuk of ease,
There, ruminate with sober thought;
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, man's true, genuine estimate, ¶
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not—Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Wast ** thou cottager or king?
Peer †† or peasant?—no such thing!
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To Virtue or to Vice is giv'n.
Say, "To be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid Self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base."

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break.
'Till future life—future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before!

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quoth the beadsman of Nith-side.

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* VAR.—Airy.—MS.

† VAR.—Peace, the tenderest flower of Spring;
Pleasures, insects on the wing.—MS.

‡ VAR. Their.—MS. § VAR. Duty.—MS.

‖ ["The hermitage in which these elegant lines were written was the property of Captain Riddel, a distinguished antiquarian, who lived in Friars-Carse some mile or so above Ellisland. A small door admitted the Poet, at his own pleasure, into the wood where the Hermitage was built; there he found such seclusion as he loved; flowers and shrubs were thickly planted round the place, and in the interior were chairs and a table for the accommodation of visiters. The first six lines of the poem were inscribed with a diamond, which Burns ever carried about with him, on a pane of glass in the window. While Riddel lived, and even during the life of Burns, the verses were respected; the proprietor, however, at length removed them and had them secured in a frame. Friars-Carse is altogether one of the loveliest spots in the Nith: the natural beauty of the place was much improved by the taste of the antiquarian. He formed picturesque lines of road; planted elegant shrubberies; raised a rude Druidic temple on the summit of a rough precipitous hill, which over-towers the Nith, and in all the chief walks of his grounds he placed many rare and valuable reliques of Scotland's elder day: such as sculptured troughs, ornamented crosses, and inscribed altars, which he had collected at much outlay from all parts of Scotland—"I shall transcribe for you," says Burns to Mrs. Dunlop, "a few lines I wrote in a hermitage, belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are almost the only favours the muses have conferred on me in this country;" and to Miss Chalmers, he writes, in September, 1788, "One day in a Hermitage, on the banks of the Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as to give me a key at pleasure, I wrote the above, supposing myself the sequestered venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion."]

¶ VAR.—Say, the criterion of their fate,
The important query of their state.

** Wert.—MS. †† Prince.—MS.

To Captain Riddel,

OF GLENRIDDEL.

EXTEMPORE LINES ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER.

Ellisland, Monday Evening.

YOUR news &review,* Sir, I've read through &
With little admiring or blaming; [through, Sir,
The papers are barren of home-news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends, the reviewers, those chippers and
Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir; [hewers,
But of *meet* or *unmeet* in a *fabric complete*,
I boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your good-
Bestow'd on your servant, the Poet; [ness
Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

A Mother's Lament,†

FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.

FATE gave the word, the arrow sped,
And pierc'd my darling's heart;
And with him all the joys are fled
Life can to me impart.
By cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonour'd laid:
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age's future shade.

The mother-linnet in the brake
Bewails her ravish'd young;
So I, for my lost darling's sake,
Lament the live-day long.
Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow,
Now, fond, I bare my breast,
O, do thou kindly lay me low
With him I love, at rest!

First Epistle to R. Graham, Esq.

OF FINTRAY.‡

WHEN Nature her great master-piece design'd,
And fram'd her last, best work, the human mind,
Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
She form'd of various parts the various man.

Then first she calls the useful many forth;
Plain plodding industry, and sober worth:
Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
And merchandise' whole genus take their birth:
Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
And all mechanics' many-apron'd kinds.
Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
The lead and buoy are needful to the net;
The *caput mortuum* of gross desires
Makes a material for mere knights and squires;
The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,
She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave de-
Law, physic, politics, and deep divines: [signs,
Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
Nature, well pleas'd, pronounc'd it very good;
But ere she gave creating labour o'er,
Half-jest, she try'd one curious labour more.
Some spumy, fiery, *ignis fatuus* matter,
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;
With arch alacrity and conscious glee
(Nature may have her whim as well as we,
Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
She forms the thing, and christens it—a poet,
Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
When blest to-day, unmindful of to-morrow.
A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends,
Admir'd and prais'd—and there the homage ends:

---

* ["The review which Captain Riddel sent to the Bard contained sharp strictures on his poetry. Burns estimated at once the right value of all such criticisms; he felt that true genius had nothing to dread, and that dulness and stupidity would sink, from their own weight, without the aid of satire. In another place, when speaking of the 'chippers and hewers,' he questions their jurisdiction, and claims to be tried by his peers. His peers could not easily be found; so the Poet was safe. Burns was a frequent guest at the board of Glenriddel, and, as he returned to Ellisland, he loved to linger on Nithside,

'Delighted with the dashing roar,'

when the river, swollen, perhaps, with rains on the mountains, was rough and raging, and

'Chaf'd against the scaur's red side,'

on the summit of which he had built his abode."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

† ["The Mother's Lament," says the Poet, in one copy of the poem, "was composed partly with a view to Mrs. Fergusson of Craigdarrock, and partly to the worthy patroness of my early unknown muse, Mrs. Stewart, of Afton." It was also inserted in the Musical Museum to the tune of "Finlayston House."—See Burns's Remarks on Scottish Song, under this title.]

‡ [Robert Graham, Esq., of Fintray, was one of the Commissioners of Excise, and having met the Poet at the Duke of Athole's, he became interested in his behalf, and shewed him many kindnesses. In August, 1788, Burns sent Mrs. Dunlop fourteen lines of this Epistle, beginning with:—

"Pity the tuneful muses' helpless train,"

saying, "Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following lines were the production of yesterday, as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an Epistle, which I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my Excise hopes depend, Mr. Graham, of Fintray, one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen, not only of this country, but, I will dare to say, of this age." To Dr. Moore, the Poet thus writes, in January, 1789:—"I enclose you an Essay of mine, in a walk of poesy to me entirely new. I mean the Epistle addressed to Robert Graham, Esq., of Fintray, a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. This story of the Poem, like most of my Poems, is connected with my own story, and to give you the one, I must give you something of the other."]

[To Professor Stewart, he said, a few weeks afterwards:—This Poem is a species of composition new to me; but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the "Poet's Progress." These fragments, if my design succeeds, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions, ripened by years. On a subsequent occasion, the Poet wrote to Mrs. Graham, sending her the "Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots," and expressing the warmest gratitude to her husband. It is singular that the Poet did not insert this Address to Mr. Graham in the last two editions of the Poems, published during his life-time. The manuscript of the poem is united with the "Lines on the Hermitage," and the "Lament of Mary," and endorsed thus:—"The three foregoing poems are the favour of the Nithsdale muses."]

A mortal quite unfit for fortune's strife,
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live;
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.
Pitying the propless climber of mankind,
She cast about a standard tree to find;
And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
Attach'd him to the generous truly great,
A title, and the only one I claim, [ham.
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Gra-

Pity the tuneful muses' hapless* train,
Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main!
Their hearts no selfish stern absorbent stuff,
That never gives—tho' humbly takes enough;
The little fate allows,† they share as soon,
Unlike sage, proverb'd, wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
The world were blest did bliss on them depend,
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend!"
Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
Who feel by reason and who give by rule,
(Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should*—
We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good?
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come ye, who the godlike pleasure know,
Heaven's attribute distinguished—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
Come thou who giv'st with all a courtier's grace;
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
Why shrinks my soul half blushing, half afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful nine—
Heavens! should the branded character be mine!
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit
Soars on the spurning wing of injur'd merit!
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Pity the best of words should be but wind!
So to heav'n's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.

In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
They dun benevolence with shameless front;
Oblige them, patronize their tinsel lays,
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again;
The pie-bald jacket let me patch once more;
On eighteen-pence a week I've liv'd before.
Tho' thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift!
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift:
That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
My muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

ON THE DEATH OF

Sir James Hunter Blair.‡

The lamp of day, with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sunk beneath§ the western wave;
Th'inconstant blast howl'd thro'the dark'ning air,
And hollow whistl'd in the rocky cave.

Lone as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
Once the lov'd haunts of Scotia's royal train;‖
Or mus'd where limpid streams, once hallow'd well,¶
Or mould'ring ruins mark the sacred Fane.**

Th' increasing blast roar'd round the beetling rocks, [sky,
The clouds, swift-wing'd, flew o'er the starry
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclos'd a stately form,
In weeds of woe, that frantic beat her breast,
And mix'd her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
'Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd:
Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

Revers'd that spear, redoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurl'd,
That like a deathful meteor gleam'd afar,
And brav'd the mighty monarchs of the world.—

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms she cried;
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd to save, [pride!
Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest††

* Var.—Helpless.—MS.
† Var.—Bestows.—MS.
‡ [In one of the Poet's memorandum-books these verses were written with a pencil: he intimated that he had just composed them, and noted them down lest they should escape from his memory. They were admitted into the first Liverpool edition, but excluded from others; they are now placed among the works of Burns. Sir James Hunter Blair was born at Ayr in 1741, and died July 1, 1787, in the forty-seventh year of his age. He rose to eminence as a member of the banking-house of Sir William Forbes and Company, of Edinburgh.]
§ Var.—Beyond.—MS.
‖ The King's Park, at Holyrood-house.—R. B.
¶ St. Anthony's Well.—R. B. Burns wrote originally,
Or mus'd where erst revered waters well.
** St. Anthony's Chapel.—R. B.
†† Var.—Honour's.—MS.

"A weeping country joins a widow's tear,
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
The drooping arts surround their patron's bier,
And grateful science heaves the heart-felt sigh!—

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair freedom's blossoms richly blow:
But ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless fate has laid their guardian low.—

"My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name?
No; every muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

"And I will join a mother's tender cares,
Thro' future times to make his virtues last;
That distant years may boast of other Blairs!"—
She said, and vanish'd with the sweeping blast.

Epistle to Hugh Parker.*

In this strange land, this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne'er crost the muse's heckles,
Nor limpet in poetic shackles;
A land that prose did never view it,
Except when drunk he stacher't thro' it;
Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk,
I hear it—for in vain I leuk.—
The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
Enhusked by a fog infernal:
Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters;
For life and spunk like ither Christians,
I'm dwindled down to mere existence;
Wi' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae kenn'd face but Jenny Geddes.†
Jenny, my Pegasean pride!
Dowie she saunters down Nithside,
And aye a westlin leuk she throws,
While tears hap o'er her auld brown nose!
Was it for this, wi' canny care,
Thou bure the Bard through many a shire?
At howes or hillocks never stumbled,
And late or early never grumbled?—
O, had I power like inclination,
I'd heeze thee up a constellation,
To canter with the Sagitarre,
Or loup the ecliptic like a bar;
Or turn the pole like any arrow;
Or, when auld Phœbus bids good-morrow,
Down the zodiac urge the race,
And cast dirt on his godship's face;
For I could lay my bread and kail
He'd ne'er cast saut upo' thy tail.—
Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
And sma', sma' prospect of relief,
And nought but peat-reek i' my head,
How can I write what ye can read?—
Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
Ye'll find me in a better tune;
But till we meet and weet our whistle,
Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

Robert Burns.

* [This lively epistle, dated June, 1788, was addressed to Mr. Hugh Parker, merchant in Kilmarnock, one of the Poet's earliest friends and patrons Burns had then just commenced house-keeping in Ellisland. Parker subscribed for thirty copies of the Poet s Works, when he first brought them out at the Kilmarnock press—a fact honourable to his memory.]

† The Poet's mare.

ELEGY
On the Year 1788.
A SKETCH.

For Lords or Kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them die—for that they're born!
But oh! prodigious to reflec'!
A Towmont, Sirs, is gane to wreck!
O Eighty-eight, in thy sma' space
What dire events ha'e taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire's tint a-head,
An' my auld teethless Bawtie's dead;
The Tulzie's sair 'tween Pitt an' Fox,
And our guid wife's wee birdie cocks; ‡
The tane is game, a bluidie devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil:
The tither's something dour o' treadin',§
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden.

Ye ministers, come mount the pu'pit,
An' cry till ye be hearse an' roupit,
For Eighty-eight he wish'd you weel,
An' gied you a' baith gear an meal;
E'en mony a plack, and mony a peck,
Ye ken yoursels, for little feck!—

Ye bonnie lasses, dight your een,
For some o' you ha'e tint a frien';
In Eighty-eight, ye ken, was ta'en,
What ye'll ne'er ha'e to gie again.

Observe the very nowte an' sheep,
How dowff and dowie now they creep;
Nay, even the yirth itsel' does cry,
For Embrugh wells are grutten dry.

O Eighty-nine, thou's but a bairn,
An' no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak' care,
Thou now hast got thy daddy's chair,
Nae hand-cuff'd, muzzl'd, half-shackl'd Regent,

‡ Var.—An' 'tween our Maggie's twa wee cocks.—MS.
[Truly has the ploughman Bard described the natures of those illustrious rivals, Fox and Pitt, under the similitude of the "birdie cocks." Nor will the allusion to the "handcuffed, muzzled, half-shackled Regent" be lost on those who remember the alarm into which the nation was thrown by the King's illness.—Cunningham.]

§ Var.—The tither's dour has nae sic breedin'.

But, like himsel', a full, free agent.
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae waur than he did, honest man!
As muckle better as you can.

January 1, 1789.

Address to the Tooth-ache,*

WRITTEN WHEN THE AUTHOR WAS GRIEVOUSLY TORMENTED BY THAT DISORDER.

My curse upon thy venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang;
And thro' my lugs gies mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbours' sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Aye mocks our groan!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle!
I kick the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle,
To see me loup;
While, raving mad, I wish a heckle
Were in their doup.

O' a' the num'rous human dools,
Ill har'sts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Tooth-ache, surely bear'st the bell,
Amang them a'!

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes of discord squeel,
'Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a shoe-thick;—
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
A towmond's Tooth-ache!

* [The tooth-ache attacked Burns soon after he took up his abode at Ellisland: like other sufferers, he was any thing but patient under it. In a letter from Ellisland, in May 1789, he complains of "an Omnipotent tooth-ache engrossing all his inner man."]

ODE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

Mrs. Oswald.†

Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation! mark
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonour'd years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
Can thy keen inspection trace
Aught of humanity's sweet melting grace?
Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows,
Pity's flood there never rose.
See these hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took—but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest.
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest—
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPE.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
(Awhile forbear, ye tort'ring fiends;)
Seest thou whose step, unwilling, hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies;
'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate,
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a-year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driv'n!
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

SKETCH

Inscribed to the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox.

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white;

† [The origin of this bitter effusion is thus related by the Poet to Dr. Moore:—Ellisland, March 23d, 1789.—"The enclosed Ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. [Oswald], of [Auchincruive]. You, probably, knew her personally, an honour which I cannot boast, but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath, she was much less blamable. In January last, on my road to Ayr-shire, I had to put up at Bailie Whigham's, in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day; and just as my friend the bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late Mrs. Oswald; and poor I am forced to brave all the terrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse—my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, further on, through the wildest hills and moors of Ayr-shire, to New Cumnock, the next inn! The powers of poesy and prose sink under me when I would describe what I feel. Suffice it to say that, when a good fire, at New Cumnock, had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode." The Poet lived to think more favourably of the name; one of his finest lyrics, "O wat ye wha's in yon town," was written in honour of the beauty of the succeeding Mrs. Oswald.

How genius, th' illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—
I sing: if these mortals, the critics, should bustle,
I care not, not I—let the critics go whistle!

But now for a patron, whose name and whose glory
At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits;
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem mere lucky hits; [strong,
With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so
No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong;
With passions so potent, and fancies so bright,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite right;—
A sorry, poor misbegot son of the muses,
For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

Good L—d, what is man! for as simple he looks,
Do but try to develope his hooks and his crooks;
With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil;
All in all he's a problem must puzzle the devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely* labours, [up its neighbours;
That, like th' old Hebrew walking-switch, eats
Mankind† are his show-box—a‡ friend, would you know him? [shew him.
Pull the string, ruling passion the picture will
What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,
One trifling particular, truth, should have miss'd
For, spite of his fine theoretic positions, [him;
Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its tribe,
And think human nature they truly describe;
Have you found this, or t'other? there's more in the wind, [find.
As by one drunken fellow his comrades you'll
But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan,
In the make of that wonderful creature, call'd man.
No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
Nor even two different shades of the same,
Though like as was ever twin brother to brother,
Possessing the one shall§ imply you've the other.

[The following lines are now restored to the text from the original MS. in the hand-writing of the Poet.

This "Sketch" was not printed in any edition of the Poet's works, revised by himself. For these lines we are indebted to the beautiful edition of the Poetic Works of Burns, published by Mr. Pickering in 3 Vols. London, 1839.]

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated Ellisland, 4th April, 1789, the Poet says, "I have a poetic whim in my head, which I at present dedicate, or rather inscribe, to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox; but how long that fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the first lines I have just rough sketched."

But truce with abstraction, and truce with a muse, [to peruse;
Whose rhymes you'll perhaps, Sir, ne'er deign
Will you leave your justings, your jars, and your quarrels, [laurels.
Contending with Billy for proud-nodding
My much honour'd patron, believe your poor Poet, [you show it;
Your courage much more than your prudence
In vain with Squire Billy for laurels you struggle,
He'll have them by fair trade, if not, he will smuggle;
Not cabinets even of Kings would conceal 'em,
He'd up the back-stairs, and by G— he would steal 'em. [achieve 'em,
Then feats like Squire Billy's you ne'er can
It is not, outdo him, the task is, out-thieve him.]

ON SEEING

A Wounded Hare

LIMP BY ME,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT.

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field!
The bitter little that of life remains: [plains
No more the thickening brakes and verdant
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,‖
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

¶ Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn;
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim,** and mourn thy hapless fate.

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* VAR.—Warmly.—MS. in Burns's writing.
† VAR.—Human nature's.—MS.
‡ VAR.—Your.—MS. § VAR.—Must.—MS.
‖ VAR.—This verse originally stood thus:
Seek, mangled innocent, some wonted form;
That wonted form, alas! thy dying bed,
The sheltering rushes whistling o er thy head,
The cold earth with thy blood-stained bosom warm.

¶ In his first rough-draught the following fine verse stands between the third and fourth stanzas:

Perhaps a mother's anguish adds its woe;
The playful pair crowd fondly by thy side;
Ah! helpless nurslings, who will now provide
That life a mother only can bestow?

** VAR.—And curse the ruthless wretch, &c.—MS.

[This poem, like most of the productions of Burns, is founded on fact. James Thomson, whose father occupied a farm adjoining to that of Ellisland, has stated that once in the gloaming he shot at, and hurt, a hare, which, like that of Gay, had come forth

"To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn."

Burns was walking on Nithside, the hare ran bleeding by him; "upon which," said Thomson, "he cursed me, and said he would not mind throwing me into the water; and I'll warrant he could hae don't, though I was both young and strong."

Burns copied out these verses, and laid them before the critical eye of Dr. Gregory. The boor of Nithside hardly used the hare worse than the critic of Edinburgh used the poem:—"'The wounded hare,'" said he, "is a pretty good subject; but the measure or stanza you have chosen for it is not a good one—it does not *flow* well, and the rhyme of the fourth line is almost lost by its distance from the first, and the two interposed close rhymes. If I were you, I would put it into a different stanza yet.

"Stanza 1.—The execrations in the first two lines are too strong or coarse; but they may pass. *Murder-aiming* is a bad compound epithet, and not very intelligible; *blood-stained* in the third stanza, line 4, has the same fault; *bleeding-bosom* is infinitely better. You have accustomed yourself to such epithets, and have no notion how stiff and quaint they appear to others, and how incongruous with poetic fancy and tender sentiments. Suppose Pope had written,—

"Why that blood-stained bosom gored?"

how would you have liked it? *Form* is neither a poetic, nor a dignified, nor a plain common word: it is a mere sportsman's word—unsuitable to pathetic or serious poetry.

"*Mangled* is a coarse word. *Innocent*, in this sense, is a nursery word; but both may pass.

Stanza 4.—

"Who will now provide
That life a mother only can bestow?"

will not do at all: it is not grammar: it is not intelligible. Do you mean, 'provide for that life which the mother has bestowed, and used to provide for?'

"There was a ridiculous slip of the pen, *feeling* (I suppose) for *fellow*, in the title of your copy of verses; but even 'fellow' would be wrong: it is but a colloquial and vulgar word, unsuitable to your sentiments. *Shot* is improper too. On seeing a *person* (or a sportsman) wound a hare, it is needless to add with what weapon; but if you think otherwise, you should say, *with a* fowling-piece."

"It must be admitted," says Dr. Currie, "that this criticism is not more distinguished by its good sense than by its freedom from ceremony. It is impossible not to smile at the manner in which the poet may be supposed to have received it. In fact it appears, as the sailors say, to have thrown him *quite aback*. In a letter which the Poet wrote soon after, he says, 'Dr. Gregory is a good man, but he crucifies me: I believe in his iron justice; but, like the devils, I believe and tremble.' However, he profited by these criticisms, as the reader will find, by comparing this first edition of the poem with that subsequently published."

"From the feelings expressed in this little piece for the wounded hare, and the indignant terms in which the Poet rates its ruthless assailant, it is evident that he was not like the keen sportman, who, while defending the humanity of hunting, coolly maintained that it being as much the nature of a hare to run away, as of a dog to run after her, consequently the hare must receive as much pleasure from being coursed as the dog from coursing; but this was not the philosophy of the Poet: like the prioress of Chaucer, he felt for all inferior animals."—MOTHERWELL.]

Epistle to Dr. Blacklock,*

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER.

Ellisland, 21st Oct. 1789.

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie!
I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie
Wad bring ye to:
Lord send you ay as weel's I want ye,
And then ye'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron† south!
And never drink be near his drouth!
He tauld mysel' by word o' mouth,
He'd tak' my letter;
I lippen'd to the chiel in trouth,
And bade‡ nae better.

* [The exertions of this gentleman in favour of the Poet prevented his exiling himself to Jamaica at the commencement of his career. Dr. Blacklock was an enthusiast in his admiration of an art which he had practised himself with applause. He felt the claims of a poet with paternal sympathy; and he had in his constitution a tenderness and sensibility that would have engaged his beneficence for a youth in the circumstances of Burns, even though he had not been indebted to him for the delight which he received from his works. * * * * * He was not of a disposition to discourage with feeble praise, and to shift off the trouble of future patronage, by bidding him relinquish poetry, and mind his plough."—PROFESSOR WALKER.]

† "Heron, author of the History of Scotland, published in 1800; an.., among various other works, of a respectable life of our Poet himself."—CURRIE.

‡ Expected.

But aiblins honest Master Heron,
Had at the time some dainty fair one,
To ware his theologic care on,
And holy study;
And tir'd o' sauls to waste his lear on,
E'en tried the body.

But what d'ye think, my trusty fier,
I'm turn'd a gauger—Peace be here!
Parnassian queans, I fear, I fear,
Ye'll now disdain me!
And then my fifty pounds a year
Will little gain me.

Ye glaikit, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha, by Castalia's wimplin' streamies,
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies;
Ye ken yoursels my heart right proud is—
I need na vaunt,
But I'll sned besoms—thraw saugh woodies,
Before they want.

Lord, help me thro' this world o' care!
I'm weary sick o't late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than mony ithers;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a' men brithers?

Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man!
And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
A lady fair:
Wha does the utmost that he can,
Will whyles do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme,
(I'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time,)
To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife;
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
And eke the same to honest Lucky,
I wat she is a dainty chuckie,
As e'er tread clay!
And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
I'm yours for ay,

ROBERT BURNS.

[The letter which called forth these verses from Burns was in rhyme, and dated from Edinburgh, 24th August, 1789. It is here subjoined:

"DEAR BURNS, thou brother of my heart.
Both for thy virtues and thy art;
If art it may be call'd in thee,
Which nature's bounty large and free
With pleasure in thy breast diffuses,
And warms thy soul with all the Muses.
Whether to laugh with easy grace,
Thy numbers move the sage's face,
Or bid the softer passions rise,
And ruthless souls with grief surprise,
'Tis nature's voice distinctly felt,
Thro' thee, her organ, thus to melt.

"Most anxiously I wish to know
With thee of late how matters go;
How keeps thy much lov'd Jean her health?
What promises thy farm of wealth?
Whether the Muse persists to smile,
And all thy anxious cares beguile?
Whether bright fancy keeps alive?
And how thy darling infants thrive?

"For me, with grief and sickness spent,
Since I my journey homeward bent,
Spirits depress'd no more I mourn,
But vigour, life, and health return.
No more to gloomy thoughts a prey,
I sleep all night, and live all day;
By turns my book and friend enjoy,
And thus my circling hours employ;
Happy while yet these hours remain,
If Burns could join the cheerful train,
With wonted zeal, sincere and fervent,
Salute once more his humble servant,

"THOMAS BLACKLOCK.

"There was never, perhaps," says Heron, "one among all mankind whom you might more truly have called *an angel upon earth* than Dr. Blacklock. He was guileless and innocent as a child, yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration. His heart was a perpetual spring of benignity. His feelings were all tremblingly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the pious, the virtuous. Poetry was to him the dear solace of perpetual blindness.

Such was the amiable old man whose life Mackenzie has written, and on whom Johnson 'looked with reverence.' 'This morning,' says the great lexicographer, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, dated August 17, 1773, 'I saw at breakfast Dr. Blacklock, the blind poet, who does not remember to have seen light, and is read to by a poor scholar, in Latin, Greek, and French. He was, originally, a poor scholar himself. I looked on him with reverence."

"The writings of Blacklock," says Lockhart, with great eloquence, "are forgotten, though some of his songs in *the Museum* deserve another fate; but the memory of his virtues will not pass away, until mankind shall have ceased to sympathise with the misfortunes of genius, and to appreciate the poetry of Burns."

The unfortunate Heron, of whom such unceremonious mention is made in this epistle of Burns, after undergoing great privations, sought shelter in London, and died there in misery in 1807. His own "unmerited sorrows and sufferings," says Lockhart, "would not have left so dark a stain on the literary history of Scotland, had the kind spirit of Blacklock been common among his lettered countrymen."

Delia.

AN ODE.

FAIR the face of orient day,
Fair the tints of op'ning rose;
But fairer still my Delia dawns,
More lovely far her beauty blows.

Sweet the lark's wild-warbled lay,
Sweet the tinkling rill to hear;
But, Delia, more delightful still,
Steal thine accents on mine ear.

The flower-enamour'd busy bee,
The rosy banquet loves to sip;
Sweet the streamlet's limpid lapse
To the sun-brown'd Arab's lip;—

But, Delia, on thy balmy lips
Let me, no vagrant insect, rove!
O, let me steal one liquid kiss!
For, oh! my soul is parch'd with love!

One day when the Poet was at Brownhill, in Nithsdale, a friend read some verses, composed after the pattern of Pope's song, by a person of quality, and said, "Burns, this is beyond you; the muse of Kyle cannot match the muse of London City." The Poet took the paper, hummed the verses over for a minute or two, and then recited, "Delia, an Ode." He afterwards sent the MS. to the Publisher of the London Star—in which paper it first appeared, with the following characteristic letter:—

"Mr. Printer,—If the productions of a simple ploughman can merit a place in the same paper with Sylvester Otway,* and the other favourites of the Muses, who illuminate the Star with the lustre of genius, your insertion of the enclosed trifle will be succeeded by future communications from,

Yours, &c.
ROBERT BURNS.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, May 18th, 1789.

["The inn of Brownhill, in the parish of Closeburn, was a favourite resting-place for Burns. Dalgarnock, where the heroine of one of his songs went on a tryste, forms part of the parish, and its old burial ground has since become famous as the place where Old Mortality employed his chisel: Creehope-Lynn, too, where the Cameronians sought shelter, is in the neighbourhood; moreover, the landlord, Mr. Bacon, was a well-informed and very facetious person—loved a dram and a joke, and had the art of making his presence acceptable to very polite visiters. The diamond of the Poet had not been idle on the windows; but accident and curiosity have now removed all marks of his hand."—CUNNINGHAM.]

* The assumed name of a Mr. Oswald, an Officer of the army, who frequently contributed verses to the Star newspaper.

To John M'Murdo, Esq.

O, COULD I give thee India's wealth
As I this trifle send!
Because thy joy in both would be
To share them with a friend.

But golden sands did never grace
The Heliconian stream;
Then take what gold could never buy—
An honest Bard's esteem.

To the Same.

BLEST be M'Murdo to his latest day!
No envious cloud o'ercast his evening ray;
No wrinkle furrowed by the hand of care,
Nor ever sorrow add one silver hair!
O, may no son the father's honour stain,
Nor ever daughter give the mother pain!

[John M'Murdo, Esq., was steward to the Duke of Queensberry, and the faithful friend of Burns during the whole period of his residence in Nithsdale. At his fireside he enjoyed many happy hours. The daughters of his friend were beautiful and accomplished, and inspired some exquisite lyrics. The first two verses accompanied a present of books or verse. Afterwards, when on a visit, he took out a diamond, and wrote the additional six lines on a pane of glass.]

Prologue,

SPOKEN AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES, ON NEW YEARS-DAY EVENING.

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city
That queen's it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Tho', by-the-bye, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home:
But not for panegyric I appear,
I come to wish you all a good new-year!
Old Father Time deputes me here before ye,
Not for to preach, but tell his simple story:
The sage grave ancient cough'd, and bade me say,
"You're one year older this important day."
If wiser, too—he hinted some suggestion,
But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the question;
And with a would-be roguish leer and wink,
He bade me on you press this one word—
"think!"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flushed with hope and spirit,
Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
To you the dotard has a deal to say,
In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way!

He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
That the first blow is ever half the battle; [him,
That tho' some by the skirt may try to snatch
Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him;
That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, tho' not least in love, ye faithful fair,
Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
To you old Bald-pate smooths his wrinkled brow,
And humbly begs you'll mind the important NOW!
To crown your happiness he asks your leave,
And offers bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, tho' haply weak, endeavours,
With grateful pride we own your many favours;
And howsoe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,
Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

[Burns at one period turned his thoughts on the drama, and even went so far as to select a subject, and compose some verses. To enable him to give a proper effect to his musings, he visited sometimes the Dumfries theatre, even while he lived at Ellisland, and appeared to take pleasure in the performances.

On the 11th of January, 1790, he thus writes to his brother Gilbert: "We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now: I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On New-year's-day I gave him the above prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause." And on the 9th of February following, he said, "I have given Mr. Sutherland two prologues, one of which was delivered last week." The theatre of Dumfries is small and neat, and there is not a little taste for the drama among the people of the vale of Nith.]

Scots Prologue,

FOR

MR. SUTHERLAND'S BENEFIT NIGHT,

DUMFRIES.

WHAT needs this din about the town o' Lon'on,
How this new play an' that new sang is comin'?
Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle courted?
Does nonsense mend like whiskey, when imported?
Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame?
For comedy abroad he need na toil,
A fool and knave are plants of every soil;
Nor need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece
To gather matter for a serious piece;
There's themes enow in Caledonian story,
Would shew the tragic muse in a' her glory.—

Is there no daring bard will rise, and tell
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless fell?
Where are the muses fled that could produce
A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce;
How here, even here, he first unsheath'd the sword,
'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord;
And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of ruin?
O for a Shakespeare or an Otway scene,
To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen!
Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms
'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms.
She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman:
A woman—tho' the phrase may seem uncivil—
As able and as cruel as the Devil!
One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,
But Douglases were heroes every age:
And tho' your fathers, prodigal of life,
A Douglas followed to the martial strife,
Perhaps if bowls row right, and Right succeeds,
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye hae generous done, if a' the land
Would take the muses' servants by the hand;
Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them,
And where ye justly can commend, commend them;
And aiblins when they winna stand the test,
Wink hard and say the folks hae done their best!
Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caution
Ye'll soon hae poets o' the Scottish nation,
Will gar fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
And warsle time, and lay him on his back!
For us and for our stage should ony spier,
"Whase aught thae chiels maks a' this bustle here?"
My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,
We have the honour to belong to you!
We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,
But like good mithers, shore before ye strike.—
And gratefu' still I hope ye'll ever find us,
For a' the patronage and meikle kindness
We've got frae a' professions, sets and ranks:
God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

[The Scots prologue was accompanied with the following letter to Mr. Sutherland:—

Monday Morning.

"I was much disappointed in wanting your most agreeable company yesterday. However, I heartily pray for good weather next Sunday; and whatever aerial being has the guidance of the elements, he may take any other half dozen of Sundays he pleases, and clothe them with

> Vapours, and clouds, and storms,
> Until he terrify himself
> At combustion of his own raising.

I shall see you on Wednesday forenoon. In the greatest hurry, R. B.

In a letter to William Nicol, dated the 9th of February, 1790, Burns wrote—"For the last two or three months, on an average, I have not ridden less than two hundred miles per week. I have done little in the poetic way. I have given Mr. Sutherland two prologues, one of which was delivered last week."

"The themes which Burns points out for the tragic muse are noble ones:—but the heroic Wallace and the beauteous Mary would require sentiment and pathos such as are rare in the modern drama. James Grahame, the author of the Sabbath, and Thomas Doubleday, of Newcastle, have composed dramas on the subject of Queen Mary, and both have produced scenes which cannot be perused without emotion. Scott, too, has thrown the charms of his genius around a life already sufficiently romantic. The words which Grahame ascribes to Mary when she looks from England towards her native land, are touching:—

MARY.—O England! England! grave of murdered princes!
Why did I leave thee, Scotland, dearest land?
In thee I had some friends—they died for me:
O were I on the side of yon dim mountain!
Though wild and bleak it be, it is in Scotland.
ADELAIDE.—Alas! 'tis but a cloud.
MARY.—No! 'tis a mountain of sweet Annandale.
ADELAIDE.—Ah, no! 'tis but a cloud; you know our distance.
MARY.—Well, then, it is a cloud that hovers o'er
My dear, my native land: I love that cloud,
That misty robe of spirits. O, Adelaide,
Come soothe me with that mournful song———
'Tis an old thing; we heard it in the days
Of happiness, and yet it filled our eyes
With tears: we heard it in the vale of Morven:
'Twas something—'Twas about the voice of Cona
ADELAIDE.—The maiden with the distaff by the stream
'Twas she that sung it.
I do remember—and after she had sung it,
She tried to tell it o'er in broken Scottish.
MARY.—Let me hear it.
ADELAIDE.—I feel my heart so full that but one note,
A single note, sung even by myself,
Would quite untune my voice.
MARY.—The weary rook hies home—my home's a prison,
All things are free but me. Why did I leave
Lochleven's beauteous isle? There I could range
Along the shore, or, seated on the bank,
Hope still for better days."

Mary's woes still await some future Shakspeare, or pathetic Otway."—CUNNINGHAM.

New Year's Day.—A Sketch.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

THIS day, Time winds th' exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonth's length again:
I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
In vain assail him with their prayer;
Deaf, as my friend, he sees them press,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.
Will you (the Major's* with the hounds,
The happy tenants share his rounds;
Coila's fair Rachel's† care to-day,
And blooming Keith's‡ engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow—
—That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow—
And join with me a-moralizing,
This day's propitious to be wise in.

First, what did yesternight deliver?
"Another year is gone for ever!"
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will Time, amus'd with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may—a few years must—
Repose us in the silent dust.
Then is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes—all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of Nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies:
That on this frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight:
That future life, in worlds unknown,
Must take its hue from this alone;
Whether as Heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as Misery's woeful night.—

Since then, my honor'd, first of friends,
On this poor being all depends,
Let us th' important *now* employ,
And live as those who never die.—

Tho' you, with days and honours crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round,
(A sight, life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight, pale Envy to convulse,)
Others now claim your chief regard;
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

[The picture contained in this sketch of the fire-side of Mrs. Dunlop is equally true and beautiful. That lady herself had not only a fine taste for poetry, but she wrote verses elegant and flowing: her son, the late General Dunlop, exhibited all the courage of his house, and it has been remarked that, for fiery and persevering impetuosity of attack, few officers equalled him. Her daughter Rachel, whose skill in drawing was considerable, employed her pencil on the Coila of the Vision. To this Burns refers in one of his letters,—"I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of

* Major, afterwards General Andrew Dunlop, Mrs. Dunlop's second son. He died, unmarried, in the West Indies, in 1804, while obeying the call of his professional duty.

† Miss Rachel Dunlop, who afterwards married Robert Glasgow, Esq.

‡ Miss Keith Dunlop, the youngest daughter.

Coila. I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet, of his muse Scota—from which, by-the-by, I took the idea of Coila —

> 'Ye shake your head, but by my fegs,
> Ye've set auld Scota on her legs;
> Lang had she lien wi' beffs an' flegs,
> Bum-baz'd and dizzie;
> Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs,
> Wae's me, poor hizzie!' "

The Scota of Ross, described by Burns as the forerunner of Coila, figures in the Invocation to "The Fortunate Shepherdess." On the original MS. of these lines, in the poet's hand-writing, Burns wrote as follows: —

"On second thoughts I send you this extempore blotted sketch. It is just the first random scrawl; but if you think the piece worth while, I shall retouch it, and finish it. Though I have no copy of it, my memory serves me.]"

Lines

WRITTEN TO A GENTLEMAN WHO HAD SENT HIM A NEWSPAPER, AND OFFERED TO CONTINUE IT FREE OF EXPENSE.

KIND Sir, I've read your paper through,
And, faith, to me 'twas really new!
How guess'd ye, Sir, what maist I wanted?
This mony a day I've grain'd and gaunted
To ken what French mischief was brewin';
Or what the drumlie Dutch were doin';
That vile doup-skelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;
Or how the collieshangie works
Atween the Russians and the Turks;
Or if the Swede, before he halt,
Would play anither Charles the Twalt:
If Denmark, any body spak o't;
Or Poland, wha had now the tack o't;
How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin';
How libbet Italy was singin';
If Spaniards, Portuguese, or Swiss
Were sayin' or takin' aught amiss:
Or how our merry lads at hame,
In Britain's Court, kept up the game:
How royal George, the Lord leuk o'er him!
Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
If sleekit Chatham Will was livin',
Or glaikit Charlie got his nieve in;
How daddie Burke the plea was cookin',
If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin';
How cesses, stents, and fees were rax'd,
Or if bare a—s yet were tax'd;
The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera girls;
If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was threshin' still at hizzies' tails;
Or if he was grown oughtlins douser,
And no a perfect kintra cooser.—
A' this and mair I never heard of;
And but for you I might despair'd of.
So gratefu', back your news I send you,
And pray, a' guid things may attend you! *

Ellisland, Monday Morning, 1790.

The Ruined Maid's Lament.

OH meikle do I rue, fause love,
Oh sairly do I rue,
That e'er I heard your flattering tongue,
That e'er your face I knew.

Oh I hae tint my rosy cheeks,
Likewise my waist sae sma';
And I hae lost my lightsome heart
That little wist a fa'.

Now I maun thole the scornfu' sneer
O' mony a saucy quean;
When, gin the truth were a' but kent,
Her life's been waur than mine.

Whene'er my father thinks on me,
He stares into the wa';
My mither, she has ta'en the bed
Wi' thinkin on my fa'.

Whene'er I hear my father's foot,
My heart wad burst wi' pain;
Whene'er I meet my mither's ee,
My tears rin down like rain.

Alas! sae sweet a tree as love
Sic bitter fruit should bear!
Alas! that e'er a bonnie face
Should draw a sauty tear!

But Heaven's curse will blast the man
Denies the bairn he got;
Or leaves the painfu' lass he lov'd
To wear a ragged coat.†

Verses

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WOODS NEAR DRUMLANRIG. ‡

I.

As on the banks o' wandering Nith,
Ae smiling simmer-morn I stray'd,
And traced its bonnie howes and haughs,
Where linties sang and lambkins play'd,

* [The Poet here took the opportunity of making a hasty summary of important matters, on which even a solitary newspaper had thrown light, and this he has done with both knowledge and humour. We know now—to the shame of Europe—who has the "tack of Poland." We also know that Warren Hastings triumphed over the eloquence of his opponents, and is now looked upon by many as a sort of martyr in the cause of our empire in the East. The favourable change which took place respecting him in public opinion has been ascribed to a pamphlet written by Logan, the minister of Leith. Burns was not solitary in his sarcastic strictures on the wild course of life pursued by some of our young princes. His sallies are not ill-natured, nor is he unwilling to believe that the folly of youth will sober down into sedateness and wisdom.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [These touching verses first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the Poet's works.]

‡ [The Duke of Queensberry stripped his domains of Drumlanrig in Dumfries-shire, and Neidpath in Peebles-shire, of all the wood fit for being cut, in order to enrich the Countess of Yarmouth, whom he supposed to be his daughter, and to whom, by a singular piece of good fortune on her part, Mr. George Selwyn, the celebrated wit, also left a fortune, under the same, and probably equally mistaken, impression.]

I sat me down upon a craig,
And drank my fill o' fancy's dream,
When, from the eddying deep below,
Uprose the genius of the stream.

II.

Dark, like the frowning rock, his brow,
And troubled like his wintry wave,
And deep, as sughs the boding wind
Amang his eaves, the sigh he gave—
'And came ye here, my son," he cried,
"To wander in my birken shade?
To muse some favourite Scottish theme,
Or sing some favourite Scottish maid?

III.

"There was a time, it's nae lang syne,
Ye might hae seen me in my pride,
When a' my banks sae bravely saw
Their woody pictures in my tide;
When hanging beach and spreading elm
Shaded my stream sae clear and cool;
And stately oaks their twisted arms
Threw broad and dark across the pool;

IV.

"When glinting, through the trees, appear'd
The wee white cot aboon the mill,
And peacefu' rose its ingle reek,
That slowly curled up the hill.
But now the cot is bare and cauld,
Its branchy shelter's lost and gane,
And scarce a stinted birk is left
To shiver in the blast its lane."

V.

"Alas!" said I, "what ruefu' chance
Has twin'd ye o' your stately trees?
Has laid your rocky bosom bare?
Has stripp'd the cleeding o' your braes?
Was it the bitter eastern blast,
That scatters blight in early spring?
Or was't the wil' fire scorch'd their boughs,
Or canker-worm wi' secret sting?"

VI.

"Nae eastlan' blast," the sprite replied;
"It blew na here sae fierce and fell,
And on my dry and halesome banks
Nae canker-worms get leave to dwell:
Man! cruel man!" the genius sigh'd—
As through the cliffs he sank him down—
"The worm that gnaw'd my bonnie trees,
That reptile wears a ducal crown!"

STANZAS

On the Duke of Queensberry. *

How shall I sing Drumlanrig's Grace—
Discarded remnant of a race
Once great in martial story?
His forbears' virtues all contrasted—
The very name of Douglas blasted—
His that inverted glory.

Hate, envy, oft the Douglas bore;
But he has superadded more,
And sunk them in contempt;
Follies and crimes have stain'd the name:
But, Queensberry, thine the virgin claim,
From aught that's good exempt.

ON AN

Evening View of the Ruins of LINCLUDEN ABBEY.†

Ye holy walls, that, still sublime,
Resist the crumbling touch of time;
How strongly still your form displays
The piety of ancient days!
As through your ruins, hoar and grey,—
Ruins, yet beauteous in decay,—
The silvery moon-beams trembling fly:
The form of ages long gone by
Crowd thick on fancy's wond'ring eye,
And wake the soul to musings high.
Ev'n now, as lost in thought profound,
I view the solemn scene around,
And, pensive, gaze with wistful eyes,
The past returns, the present flies;
Again the dome, in pristine pride,
Lifts high its roof, and arches wide,
That, knit with curious tracery,
Each Gothic ornament display.
The high-arch'd windows, painted fair,
Show many a saint and martyr there.
As on their slender forms I'd gaze,
Methinks they brighten to a blaze!
With noiseless step and taper bright,
What are yon forms that meet my sight?
Slowly they move, while every eye
Is heav'n-ward rais'd in ecstasy.
'Tis the fair, spotless, vestal train,
That seek in pray'r the midnight fane.
And, hark! what more than mortal sound
Of music breathes the pile around?
'Tis the soft chanted choral song,
Whose tones the echoing aisles prolong;
Till, thence return'd, they softly stray
O'er Cluden's wave, with fond delay;
Now on the rising gale swell high,
And now in fainting murmurs die;
The boatmen on Nith's gentle stream,
That glistens in the pale moon-beam,
Suspend their dashing oars to hear
The holy anthem, loud and clear;
Each worldly thought awhile forbear,
And mutter forth a half-form'd prayer.

* [On being rallied for frequently satirising persons unworthy of his notice, and the Duke of Queensberry being instanced as an example of a higher kind of game, Burns instantly drew out his pencil and handed to his friend the above bitter stanzas.]

† [On the banks of the river Cluden, and at a short distance from Dumfries, are the beautiful ruins of the Abbey of Lincluden, which was founded in the time of Malcolm, the fourth King of Scotland. The above splendid lines by the great national Poet of Scotland first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the works of Burns, published at Glasgow in 1837, in 5 vols., small 8vo.]

But, as I gaze, the vision fails,
Like frost-work touch'd by southern gales;
The altar sinks, the tapers fade,
And all the splendid scene's decay'd;
In window fair the painted pane
No longer glows with holy stain,
But, through the broken glass, the gale
Blows chilly from the misty vale;
The bird of eve flits sullen by,
Her home, these aisles and arches high!
The choral hymn, that erst so clear
Broke softly sweet on fancy's ear,
Is drown'd amid the mournful scream,
That breaks the magic of my dream!
Rous'd by the sound, I start and see
The ruin'd sad reality!

The Discreet Hint.

Lass, when your mither is frae hame,
May I but be sae bauld
As come to your bower-window,
And creep in frae the cauld?
As come to your bower-window,
And when it's cauld an' wat,
Warm me in thy fair bosom,—
Sweet lass, may I do that?

Young man, gin ye should be sae kind,
When our gudewife's frae hame,
As come to my bower-window,
Whare I am laid my lane,
To warm thee in my bosom,—
Tak' tent, I'll tell thee what,
The way to me lies through the kirk:—
Young man, do ye hear that?

The Tree of Liberty.*

I.

Heard ye o' the tree o' France,
I watna what's the name o't;
Around it a' the patriots dance,
Weel Europe kens the fame o't.
It stands where ance the Bastile stood,
A prison built by kings, man,
When superstition's hellish brood
Kept France in leading strings, man.

II.

Upo' this tree there grows sic fruit,
It's virtues a' can tell, man;
It raises man aboon the brute,
It maks him ken himsel, man.
Gif ance the peasant taste a bit,
He's greater than a lord, man,
An' wi' the beggar shares a mite
O' a' he can afford, man.

III.

This fruit is worth a' Afric's wealth,
To comfort us 'twas sent, man:
To gi'e the sweetest blush o' health,
An' mak' us a' content, man.
It clears the een, it cheers the heart,
Maks high and low guid friends, man;
And he wha acts the traitor's part
It to perdition sends, man.

IV.

My blessings aye attend the chiel
Wha pitied Gallia's slaves, man,
And staw'd a branch, spite o' the deil,
Frae yont the western waves, man.
Fair virtue water'd it wi' care,
And now she sees wi' pride, man,
How weel it buds and blossoms there,
Its branches spreading wide, man.

V.

But vicious folks aye hate to see
The works o' virtue thrive, man;
The courtly vermin's bann'd the tree,
And grat to see it thrive, man;
King Loui' thought to cut it down,
When it was unco' sma', man;
For this the watchman crack'd his crown,
Cut aff his head and a', man.

VI.

A wicked crew syne, on a time,
Did tak' a solemn aith, man,
It ne'er should flourish to its prime,
I wat they pledg'd their faith, man;
Awa they gaed wi' mock parade,
Like beagles hunting game, man,
But soon grew weary o' the trade,
And wish'd they'd been at hame, man.

VII.

For Freedom, standing by the tree,
Her sons did loudly ca', man;
She sang a sang o' liberty,
Which pleas'd them ane and a', man.
By her inspir'd, the new-born race
Soon drew the avenging steel, man;
The hirelings ran—her foes gied chase,
And bang'd the despot weel, man.

VIII.

Let Britain boast her hardy oak,
Her poplar and her pine, man,
Auld Britain ance could crack her joke,
And o'er her neighbours shine, man.
But seek the forest round and round,
And soon 'twill be agreed, man,
That sic a tree cannot be found,
'Twixt London and the Tweed, man.

IX.

Without this tree, alake, this life
Is but a vale o' woe, man;
A scene o' sorrow mix'd wi' strife,
Nae real joys we know, man.

[* This poem is taken from a MS. in the Poet's hand-writing in the possession of Mr. James Duncan, Mosesfield, near Glasgow, and first printed in Mr. Robert Chambers's edition of the Poetical Works of Robert Burns, 1838.]

We labour soon, we labour late
To feed the titl'd knave, man,
And a' the comfort we're to get
Is that ayont the grave, man.

X.

Wi' plenty o' sic trees, I trow,
The warld would live in peace, man;
The sword would help to mak' a plough,
The din o' war wad cease, man.
Like brethren in a common cause,
We'd on each other smile, man;
And equal rights and equal laws
Wad gladden every isle, man.

XI.

Wae worth the loon wha wadna eat
Sic halesome dainty cheer, man;
I'd gie my shoon frae aff my feet,
To taste sic fruit, I swear, man.
Syne let us pray, auld England may
Sure plant this far-fam'd tree, man;
And blythe we'll sing, and hail the day
That gave us liberty, man.

Verses to my Bed.*

THOU bed, in which I first began
To be that various creature—*Man!*
And when again the fates decree,
The place where I must cease to be;—
When sickness comes, to whom I fly,
To soothe my pain, or close mine eye;—
When cares surround me where I weep,
Or lose them all in balmy sleep;—
When sore with labour, whom I court,
And to thy downy breast resort—
Where, too, ecstatic joys I find,
When deigns my Delia to be kind—
And full of love, in all her charms,
Thou giv'st the fair one to my arms.
The centre thou, where grief and pain,
Disease and rest, alternate reign.
Oh, since within thy little space,
So many various scenes take place;
Lessons as useful shalt thou teach,
As sages dictate—churchmen preach;
And man, convinc'd by thee alone,
This great important truth shall own:—
That thin partitions do divide
The bounds where good and ill reside;
That nought is perfect here below;
But BLISS *still bordering upon* WOE.

Elegy on Peg Nicholson.†

PEG Nicholson was a good bay mare,
As ever trode on airn;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And past the mouth o' Cairn.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And rode through thick and thin;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And wanting even the skin.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And ance she bore a priest;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
For Solway fish a feast.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And the priest he rode her sair;
And much oppress'd and bruis'd she was,
As priest-rid cattle are.

["One of the men of skill whom Burns brought to the aid of Peg Nicholson was the eccentric Samuel Colan; a person eminently skilled in the ailments of four-footed creatures, but who believed that all diseases among cattle or horses proceeded from witchcraft or the malice of elves and fairies. The swelling of a cow from eating dewy clover was caused, he said, by a spell: pains in the limbs arose, he was certain, from elf-arrows, and with regard to witches, he declared that the Cauldside of Dunscore was swarming with them. Little was to be hoped from honest Samuel's skill, if his employer chanced to smile as he laid down the rustic law regarding murrain, mooril, and other ailments."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson,

A GENTLEMAN
WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

"Should the poor be flattered?"
SHAKSPEARE.

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless heav'nly light! ‡

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haurl thee hame to his black smiddie,

* [These verses seem to have been suggested by a quatrain of Dr. Johnson, of which they are simply an expansion:—

In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And, born in bed, in bed we die:
The near approach a bed may show
Of human bliss and human woe.]

† [Peg Nicholson was the successor of Jenny Geddes: the latter took her name from the zealous dame who threw a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head, when the ritual of the Episcopal Church was introduced; and the former acquired the name of Peg Nicholson from that frantic virago who attempted the life of George III. Peg was lent to Burns by his friend William Nicol. The Poet enclosed the above verses in a letter to his friend, in February, 1790, with a long account of the deceased mare, which letter will be found in the correspondence of that year.]

‡ VAR. In the original MS. this motto formed the last verse of the Epitaph, and closed the subject very beautifully.

O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane! he's gane! he's frae us torn!
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd!*

Ye hills! near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns, †
Where echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin' down your glens,
Wi' toddlin' din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
Frae lin to lin!

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines, hanging bonnilie
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at its head,
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come, join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
An' mourn ye whirring ‡ paitrick brood!—
He's gane for ever.

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair§ for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r,
In some auld tree, or eldritch || tow'r,
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,
Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
'Till waukrife morn!

O, rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty strains:
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe?
And frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear:
Thou, simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear
For him that's dead!

Thou, autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear!
Thou, winter, hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare,
The worth we've lost!

Mourn him, thou sun, great source of light!
Mourn, empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return.

Oh, Henderson! the man—the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever?
And hast thou crost that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound?
Like thee, where shall I find another
The world around?

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH.

Stop, passenger!—my story's brief,
And truth I shall relate, man;
I tell nae common tale o' grief—
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at fortune's door, man,
A look of pity hither cast—
For Matthew was a poor man.

* Var. ———— woods and wilds should mourn
Wi' a' their birth;
For whunstane man to grieve wou'd scorn,
For poor plain worth.—MS.

† Eagles, so called, from their flying without that motion of the wings, common to most other birds.

‡ Var. Birring.—Afton MS.

§ Var. Rowte.—Afton MS.

|| Var. Aulder.—Afton MS.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man,
There moulders here a gallant heart—
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man,
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise—
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca'
Wad life itself resign, man,
Thy sympathetic tear maun fa'—
For Matthew was a kind man!

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man,
This was a kinsman o' thy ain—
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man,
This was thy billie, dam, and sire*—
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingin' sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man,
May dool and sorrow be his lot!
For Matthew was a rare man.

[The original MS. of this poem, written in Dumfries-shire, in 1790, in the Poet's handwriting, not only supplies some interesting variations, but is accompanied by the following characteristic note:—"Now that you are over with the sirens of flattery, the harpies of corruption, and the furies of ambition—those infernal deities that, on all sides and in all parties, preside over the villanous business of politics—permit a rustic muse of your acquaintance to do her best to soothe you with a song. You knew Henderson? I have not flattered his memory."

"The Elegy on Captain Henderson," says the Poet to Dr. Moore, in February, 1791, "is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of any avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead is, I fear very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living." Captain Henderson was a retired soldier, of agreeable manners and upright character, who had a lodging in Carruber's Close, Edinburgh, and mingled with the best society of the city: he dined regularly at Fortune's Tavern, and was a member of the Capillaire Club, which was composed of all who inclined to the witty and the joyous."]

["This Elegy is in Burns's very best style. He brings the scenes, the birds, and the flowers, quite before the eyes of our imagination. I remember Sir Walter Scott once shewing me a very old metrical tale in heroic measure, as old apparently as Gawin Douglas's day, in which all the birds and beasts of the forest are called on, in the same manner as here, and with a great deal of characteristic humour. He said this poem of Burns's was taken from that; but as far as I remember, if there is an imitation, it is but as a shade, and hardly traceable. I have never been able to find that poem again, having forgot its name and all relating to it, save that I liked it, and that all the animals of my acquaintance were brought before my eyes with something characteristic about them, even the *Toddis* and the *Wulcattis*, &c. There is likewise a poem by the Earl of Stirling, published about the time of King James the Sixth, a very curious one of the same sort, wherein he describes the peculiarities of many beasts and birds, and the horrid surprise each of them will get when the day of judgment comes on them."—HOGG.]

[Perhaps Mr. Hogg alludes to "The Passage of the Pilgremmer," by John Burell, a poem which contains a goodly catalogue of beasts and birds; or, to the "Houlate," another ancient poem.—MOTHERWELL.]

The Five Carlins.

A SCOTTISH BALLAD.

Tune—*Chevy-Chace.*

I.

THERE were five carlins in the south;
They fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to Lunnun town,
To bring them tidings hame.

II.

Not only bring them tidings hame,
But do their errands there;
And aiblins gowd and honour baith
Might be that laddie's share.

III.

There was Maggy by the banks o' Nith,†
A dame wi' pride eneugh;
And Marjory o' the mony lochs,‡
A carlin auld and teugh.

IV.

And blinkin' Bess of Annandale,§
That dwelt near Solway-side;
And whiskey Jean, that took her gill
In Galloway sae wide.‖

---

* VAR. These bones a brother's tears require.—MS.

† "Bonnie Dumfries," as the Duchess of Gordon delighted to call it.

‡ Loch-maben, the residence of king Robert Bruce, the great restorer of Scottish independence.

§ The small thriving borough of Annan.

‖ The borough of Kirkcudbright.

V.

And black Joan, frae Crichton-peel,*
O' gipsy kith an' kin;—
Five weightier carlins were na foun'
The south countrie within.

VI.

To send a lad to Lunnon town,
They met upon a day;
And mony a knight, and mony a laird,
Their errand fain wad gae.

VII.

O mony a knight, and mony a laird,
This errand fain wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
O ne'er a ane but twae.

VIII.

The first he was a belted knight,†
Bred o' a border-clan;
And he wad gae to Lunnon town,
Might nae man him withstan';

IX.

And he wad do their errands weel,
And meikle he wad say;
And ilka ane at Lunnon Court
Wad bid to him guid-day.

X.

Then niest cam in a sodger youth, ‡
And spak' wi' modest grace,
And he wad gae to Lunnon town,
If sae their pleasure was.

XI.

He wad na hecht them courtly gifts,
Nor meikle speech pretend;
But he wad hecht an honest heart,
Wad ne'er desert his friend.

XII.

Now, wham to chuse, and wham refuse,
At strife thir carlins fell;
For some had gentlefolks to please,
And some wad please themsel'.

XIII.

Then out spak' mim-mou'd Meg o' Nith,
And she spak' up wi' pride,
And she wad send the sodger youth,
Whatever might betide.

XIV.

For the auld guidman § o' Lunnon Court
She dinna care a pin;
But she wad send a sodger youth
To greet his eldest son.‖

XV.

Then slow raise Marjory o' the Lochs,
And wrinkled was her brow;
Her ancient weed was russet grey,
Her auld Scots bluid was true.

XVI.

"The Lunnon Court set light by me—¶
I set as light by them;
And I will send the sodger lad
To shaw that Court the same." **

XVII.

Then up sprang Bess of Annandale,
And swore a deadly aith,
Says, "I will send the border-knight
Spite o' you carlins baith. ††

XVIII.

"For far-aff fowls hae feathers fair,
And fools o' change are fain;
But I hae try'd this border-knight,
An' I'll try him yet again."

XIX.

Then whiskey Jean spak owre her drink,
"Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The auld guidman o' Lunnon Court,
His back's been at the wa'.

XX.

"And mony a friend that kiss'd his caup,
Is now a fremit wight;
But it's ne'er be said o' whiskey Jean,—‡‡
I'll send the border-knight."

XXI.

Says black Joan frae Crichton-peel
A carlin stoor and grim,—
"The auld guidman, an' the young guidman,
For me may sink or swim.

XXII.

"For fools will prate o' right and wrang,
While knaves laugh in their sleeve;
But wha blows best the horn shall win,
I'll speir nae courtier's leave." §§

XXIII.

Sae how this weighty plea may end
Nae mortal wight can tell:
God grant the king, and ilka man,
May look weel to himsel'!

"The Five Carlins" are the five boroughs of Dumfries-shire and Kirkcudbright, which unite in sending a member to Parliament. The personifications are considered happy by all who are acquainted with the places.

The duty which these five ladies met in Dumfries to perform was to decide whether Patrick Miller, younger, of Dalswinton, or Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, should be preferred as their representative in the House of Commons. On the side of the former all the Whig interest of the Duke of Queensberry was mustered: and on that of the latter all the interest which the Tories could command among the Hopes, the

* Sanquhar, noted for its carpet manufacture, and that species of comfortable stockings called Sanquhar hose. Its castle was besieged in person by Edward I.

† Sir J. Johnstone. ‡ Major Miller.

§ George III. ‖ The Prince of Wales.

¶ Var. There's some great folks set light by me.—MS.

** Var. But I will send to Lunnon town.
Wham I like best at hame.—MS.

†† Var. Then started Bess O'Annandale,
And a deadly aith she's ta'en',
That she wad vote the border-knight,
Tho' she should vote her lane.—MS.

‡‡ Var. *Brandy Jean* (throughout.)—MS.

§§ Var. ——— laugh them to scorn
But the sodger's friends hae blawn the best
So he shall bear the horn.—MS.

Jardines, and the Johnstones. The contest was fierce and acrimonious. The young, active men of Nithsdale, Annandale, and Eskdale, together with the youth of Galloway, marched into Dumfries, all armed with oak sticks, which in those days they were taught how to use in case of a fray; and, had not prudent and sensible men on both sides interposed and directed their eyes and minds elsewhere, confusion and strife would have ensued.

The election was at the hottest, when Burns wrote the "Five Carlins:" he sent a copy of it to Mr. Graham of Fintray, saying, "The election ballad, as you will see, alludes to the present canvass in our string of boroughs. I do not believe there will be such a hard-run match in the whole general election. Sir James Johnstone does what man can do, but yet he doubts his fate." The contest was decided in favour of Captain Miller, whose cause the Poet so powerfully supported by his pen. The poem is printed from a copy in the Poet's own handwriting.]

The Laddies by the Banks o' Nith.

AN ELECTION BALLAD.*

Tune.—*Up and waur them a'.*

THE laddies by the banks o' Nith,
Wad trust his Grace wi' a', Jamie,
But he'll sair them as he sair'd the king,
Turn tail and rin awa, Jamie.
Up and waur them a', Jamie,
Up and waur them a';
The Johnstones hae the guidin' o't,
Ye turncoat whigs, awa.

The day he stude his country's friend,
Or gied her faes a claw, Jamie,
Or frae puir man a blessin' wan,
That day the duke ne'er saw, Jamie.

But wha is he, the country's boast?
Like him there is na twa, Jamie;
There's no a callant tents the kye,
But kens o' Westerha', Jamie.

To end the wark here's Whistlebirck,†
Lang may his whistle blaw, Jamie;
And Maxwell true o' sterling blue,
And we'll be Johnstones a', Jamie.
Up and waur them a' Jamie,
Up and waur them a';
The *Johnstones* hae the guidin' o't,
Ye turncoat Whigs, awa.

Second Epistle to Robert Graham, Esq., OF FINTRAY:

ON THE CLOSE OF THE DISPUTED ELECTION BETWEEN SIR JAMES JOHNSTONE AND CAPTAIN MILLER, FOR THE DUMFRIES DISTRICT OF BOROUGHS.

I.

FINTRAY, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend o' my muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle's I am?
Come then, wi' uncouth, kintra fleg,
O'er Pegasus I'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him.

* [This is an additional ballad on the election of Dumfries burghs in 1790: it should follow "The Five Carlins." In the poem just named, and in the ensuing one, entitled "Second Epistle to Mr. Graham of Fintray," Burns describes the contest in impartial terms, as if he took no side. To a neutral course he was in some degree forced by his connections, public or private, notwithstanding the all-pervading fervour which the election occasioned in the district. But it is nevertheless evident, in the two former poems, that he inclined to the cause of Sir James Johnstone, the Tory candidate, while he was mainly prevented from speaking out against the Whigs by his being the tenant of Mr. Miller, father to the candidate on that side. In the poem, which has only of late come before the public, we have stronger evidence of his Tory inclinations: he may here be said fairly to speak out. That Burns should have at any period of his life been a Tory, may be surprising to many of his admirers; but there can be no doubt that, while his feelings were at many times of a very undecided nature, veering from Jacobitism to Whigism, and from Whigism to Toryism, he was for a certain space, to say the least of it, much more of a partisan of Pitt's ministry than of the opposition. This space seems to have extended from the time of the Regency question in 1788, to the time when the principles of the French Revolution began to affect the public mind in Britain. How far the conduct of the Whigs on that question may have operated in alienating Burns from their ranks we cannot tell: probably it was the leading cause of his becoming a more than usually decided Tory, which he was at the time of the composition of this election song. On the subject of Burns's politics, we find the following passage in a letter of Sir Walter Scott, in the recent biography of that distinguished Poet:—"In one of them (certain letters of Burns, sent by Scott to Mr. Lockhart) to that singular old curmudgeon, Lady Winifred Constable, you will see he plays high Jacobite, and, on that account, it is curious: though I imagine his Jacobitism, like my own, belonged to the fancy rather than the reason. He was, however, a great Pittite down to a certain period. There were some passing stupid verses in the papers, attacking and defending his satire on a certain preacher, whom he termed 'an unco calf.' In one of them occurred these lines in vituperation of the adversary—

'A Whig, I guess. But Rab's a Tory,
And gies us mony a funny story.'

This was in 1787." More probably, we suspect, a little later. There can of course be no doubt of the general truth of this doggrel allegation; but its limitation as to the time ought to be kept in mind. Burns only too certainly reverted at a subsequent period to Whig, or to more than Whig politics.

In the above short piece, the author first speaks of the great influence of the Duke of Queensberry as the chief proprietor in Nithsdale. He then adverts to the tergiversation of which this once Court nobleman was guilty on the Regency question, when he supported the right of the Prince of Wales to assume the government without the consent of parliament, and signed the protest to that effect, December 26, 1788; for which he was immediately deprived of his place as a lord of the bedchamber. The Poet also speaks indignantly of the worthless personal character of the Duke—a man who spent a long life of eighty-five years in one continued series of selfish debaucheries and amusements, without gracing one day of it with a good action. The contrasted virtue of Westerhall is beautifully introduced in the third stanza. It may be mentioned, for the benefit of the southern reader, that the line,

"The Johnstones hae the guidin' o't,"

is an old border proverb, relating to the immense influence once exercised in the district by this great Annandale clan.—CHAMBERS.]

† Mr. Birtwhistle, a gentleman of the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, alluded to in the second of the Heron Ballads.

II.

I'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig* bears,
Wha left the all-important cares
Of princes and their darlin's ; †
And, bent on winning ‡ borough touns,
Came shaking hands wi' wabster louns,
And kissing barefit carlins. §

III.

Combustion thro' our boroughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad,
Of mad, unmuzzl'd lions ;
As Queensberry "buff and blue" unfurl'd,
And Westerha' || and Hopeton hurl'd
To every Whig defiance.

IV.

But cautious Queensberry left the war,
Th' unmanner'd dust might soil his star ;
Besides, he hated bleeding :
But left behind him heroes bright,
Heroes in Cæsarean fight,
Or Ciceronian pleading.

V.

O ! for a throat like huge Mons-meg,
To muster o'er each ardent Whig
Beneath Drumlanrig's banners ;
Heroes and heroines commix,
All in the field of politics,
To win immortal honours.

VI.

M'Murdo ¶ and his lovely spouse,
(Th' enamour'd laurels kiss her brows !)
Led on the loves and graces :
She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, all-conquering, play'd his part
Among their wives and lasses.

VII.

Craigdarroch** led a light-arm'd corps;
Tropes, metaphors, and figures pour,
Like Hecla streaming thunder :
Glenriddel,†† skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs,
And bar'd the treason under.

VIII.

In either wing two champions fought,
Redoubted Staig ‡‡, who set at nought
The wildest savage Tory :
And Welsh, §§ who ne'er yet flinch'd his ground,
High-wav'd his magnum-bonum round
With Cyclopean fury.

IX.

Miller brought up th' artillery ranks,
The many-pounders of the Banks,
Resistless desolation !
While Maxwelton, that baron bold,
'Mid Lawson's ||| port entrench'd his hold,
And threaten'd worse damnation.

X.

To these, what Tory hosts oppos'd;
With these, what Tory warriors clos'd,
Surpasses my descriving :
Squadrons extended long and large,
With furious speed rush'd to the charge,
Like raging devils driving.

XI.

What verse can sing, what prose narrate,
The butcher deeds of bloody fate
Amid this mighty tulzie !
Grim Horror grinn'd—pale Terror roar'd,
As Murther at his thrapple shor'd,
And Hell mix'd in the brulzie !

XII.

As highland crags by thunder cleft,
When light'nings fire the stormy lift,
Hurl down wi' crashing rattle :
As flames amang a hundred woods ;
As headlong foam a hundred floods ;
Such is the rage of battle !

XIII.

The stubborn Tories dare to die ;
As soon the rooted oaks would fly
Before th' approaching fellers :
The Whigs come on like Ocean's roar,
When all his wintry billows pour
Against the Buchan Bullers.¶¶

XIV.

Lo, from the shades of Death's deep night,
Departed Whigs enjoy the fight,
And think on former daring :
The muffled murtherer *** of Charles
The Magna Charta flag unfurls,
All deadly gules its bearing.

XV.

Nor wanting ghosts of Tory fame,
Bold Scrimgeour††† follows gallant Grahame.‡‡‡
Auld Covenanters shiver.
(Forgive, forgive, much wrong'd Montrose !
While death and hell engulph thy foes,
Thou liv'st on high for ever !)

XVI.

Still o'er the field the combat burns,
The Tories, Whigs, give way by turns ;
But Fate the word has spoken ;
For woman's wit and strength o' man,
Alas ! can do but what they can—
The Tory ranks are broken !

XVII.

O that my een were flowing burns !
My voice a lioness that mourns
Her darling cubs' undoing !
That I might greet, that I might cry,
While Tories fall, while Tories fly,
And furious Whigs pursuing !

* The fourth Duke of Queensberry, of infamous memory.
† Var.—Of fiddles, wh-res, and hunters.—Afton MS.
‡ Buying.—MS. § Bunters.—Ibid.
‖ Sir James Johnstone, the Tory Candidate.
¶ The Chamberlain of the Duke of Queensberry at Drumlanrig, and a friend of the Poet.
** Ferguson of Craigdarroch.
†† Captain Riddel of Glenriddel, another friend of the Poet.
‡‡ Provost Staig of Dumfries. §§ Sheriff Welsh.
||| Lawson, a wine merchant in Dumfries.
¶¶ The "Bullers of Buchan" is an appellation given to a tremendous rocky recess on the Aberdeen-shire coast, near Peterhead—having an opening to the sea, while the top is open. The sea, constantly raging in it, gives it the appearance of a pot or boiler, and hence the name.
*** The executioner of Charles I. was masked.
††† John Earl of Dundee.
‡‡‡ The great Marquis of Montrose.

XVIII.

What Whig but wails the good Sir James?
Dear to his country by the names
Friend, patron, benefactor!
Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save!
And Hopeton falls, the generous brave!
And Stewart,* bold as Hector.

XIX.

Thou, Pitt, shalt rue this overthrow;
And Thurlow growl a curse of woe:
And Melville melt in wailing!
Now Fox and Sheridan rejoice!
And Burke shall sing, "O Prince, arise!
Thy power is all prevailing."

XX.

For your poor friend, the Bard, afar
He hears, and only hears, the war,
A cool spectator purely:
So, when the storm the forest rends,
The robin in the hedge descends,
And sober chirps securely.

[The upshot of the election contest is related in this epistle: Miller of Dalswinton triumphed, and Johnston of Westerhall was defeated. There are two copies of the poem extant, both in the Poet's hand-writing; the one belonging to Mrs. M'Murdo seems the most correct: from the other, the property of Miss Stewart of Afton, some curious and characteristic variations appear. Burns, in these poems, had a difficult part to play, and he seems to have taken the wisest course—he laughed on both sides, taking part with neither: his friends in Nithsdale were chiefly Whigs, and he looked to the Tories for getting forward in the Excise. "I am too little a man," he says to Graham, of Fintray, "to have any political attachments: I am deeply indebted to, and have the warmest veneration for, individuals of both parties; but a man who has it in his power to be the father of a country, and who acts like his Grace of Queensberry, is a character that one cannot speak of with patience." As M'Murdo was the Duke's friend, the copy belonging to that family is moderate on "the Douglas" in the second verse: not so the Afton copy; the Poet speaks out freely:—

Now for my friends and brethren's sakes,
And for my dear-lov'd land o' cakes,
I pray with holy fire:
Lord send a rough-shod troop o'hell,
O'er a' wad Scotland buy or sell,
To grind them in the mire†.

ON

CAPTAIN GROSE'S‡

Peregrinations through Scotland,

COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk§ to Johnny Groat's;
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it!

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,‖
Or kirk deserted by its riggin',
It's ten to one ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, L—d save 's! colleaguin'
At some black art.—

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chaumer,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
And you deep read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight b——es!

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
But now he's quat the spurtle-blade
And dog-skin wallet,
And ta'en the—Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,¶
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmount guid;
And parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Afore the flood.

* Stewart of Hillside.

† The above characteristic verse is added in the Afton manuscript. With this poem closes the first series of the Poet's election ballads; he appears, in an after contest of the same kind, in a rougher mood.

‡ [Captain Grose, the hero of this facetious poem, was a zealous antiquary and fond of wit and wine. He had served in the army, and, retiring from it, dedicated his leisure and his talents to investigate the antiquities of his country. He found his way to Friars-Carse where some of the ablest antiquaries of Scotland occasionally met; and at the "board of Glenriddel," he saw Burns for the first time. The Englishman heard with wonder the sarcastic sallies, epigrammatic remarks, and eloquent bursts of the Scot; while the latter was struck with the remarkable corpulency of the learned antiquary, and the most poetic feeling with which he talked of ancient allies.--- The wine of Glenriddel, too, aided in tightening the bands of acquaintanceship. The poem flew before Grose over Scotland---he was not pleased to be so heralded, and, above all, little relished the allusions to his corpulency---he thought, too, that his researches were treated with too little gravity. These sentiments had not, however, reached the Poet when he wrote to Captain Grose, at the earnest request of his friend Dugald Stewart,—that he would honour the learned professor with a visit.--The meeting took place at Catrine, as the antiquary was on his way to examine the ruins of Lorn Castle. Captain Grose died in Dublin, of an apoplectic fit, May 12, 1791, in his 52nd year.]

§ An inversion of the name of Kirkmaiden, in Wigtonshire, the most southerly parish in Scotland.

‖ *Vide* his Antiquities of Scotland.—R. B.

¶ *Vide* his Treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons.—R.B.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
Auld Tubal-Cain's fire-shool and fender;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass;
A broom-stick o' the witch o' Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,
The cut of Adam's philibeg:
The knife that nicket Abel's craig
He'll prove you fully
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gully.—

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Guid fellows wi' him;
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the powers o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chiel, O Grose!—
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, Shame fa' thee!

LINES

WRITTEN IN A WRAPPER,

ENCLOSING

A Letter to Captain Grose.*

Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?
Igo and ago,
If he's amang his friends or foes?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he south or is he north?
Igo and ago,
Or drowned in the river Forth?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he slain by Highlan' bodies!
Igo and ago,
And eaten like a wether-haggis?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he to Abram's bosom gane?
Igo and ago,
Or haudin' Sarah by the wame?
Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the L—d be near him!
Igo and ago,
As for the deil, he daur na steer him!
Iram, coram, dago.

But please transmit the enclosed letter,
Igo and ago,
Which will oblige your humble debtor,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye hae auld stanes in store,
Igo and ago,
The very stanes that Adam bore,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye get in glad possession,
Igo and ago,
The coins o' Satan's coronation!
Iram, coram, dago.

Tam O' Shanter,

A TALE.

"Of brownyis and of bogilis full is this buke."
Gawin Douglas.

When chapman billies leave the street,
An' drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearin' late,
An' folk begin to tak' the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' gettin' fou an' unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, an' styles,
That lie between us an' our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,

* [Burns made out some antiquarian and legendary memoranda respecting the ruins in Kyle, and addressed them to his late facetious gossip, Grose, under cover to Cardonnel, a well-known northern antiquary. As his mind teemed with poetry, he could not let this opportunity pass, but humming, as he folded up the letter, the well-known air of "Sir John Malcolm," wrote these lines on the envelope. Here, again, he touched on the captain's corpulency, and raised a laugh louder than the latter liked. Cardonnel read the verses whe ever he went, and the condoling inquiry over all Edinburgh was—

"Is he slain by Highlan' bodies?
And eaten like a wether-haggis?"

The old song of "Sir John Malcom," which the Poet had in his mind when he wrote to Cardonnel, is to be found in "Yair's Charmer."—A former baronet of Lochore and his neighbour "Sandie Don," being in the habit of romancing too much over the bottle, a friend, who had a knack at rhyme, reproved them in these facetious lines:

"O keep ye weel frae Sir John Malcolm.
Igo and ago,
If he's a wise man I mistak' him,
Iram, coram, dago.
O keep ye weel frae Sandie Don,
Igo and ago,
He's ten times dafter than Sir John,
Iram, coram, dago.

To hear them of their travel talk,
Igo and ago,
To gae to London's but a walk,
Iram, coram, dago,
I hae been at Amsterdam,
Igo and ago,
Where I saw mony a braw madam,
Iram, coram, dago.

To see the wonders of the deep,
Igo and ago,
Wad Gar a man both wail and weep,
Iram, coram, dago.
To see the leviathans skip,
Igo and ago,
And wi' their tail ding owre a ship,
Iram, coram, dago."]

Gath'rin' her brows like gath'rin' storm,
Nursin' her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,*
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men an' bonny lasses.)
O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A bletherin', blusterin', drucken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;

That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin' fou on;
That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton † Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doon!
Or catch'd wi' warlocks i' the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.‡

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet
To think how mony counsels sweet,

* ["The original of Tam o' Shanter was an individual named Douglas Grahame, a Carrick farmer. Shanter is a farm on the Carrick shore, near Kirkoswald, which Grahame long possessed. The man was, in sober truth, the "bletherin', blusterin' blellum" that the poet has described; and his wife was as veritably a lady who most anxiously discouraged drinking in her husband. Burns, when a boy, spent some time at Kirkoswald, in the house of a maternal uncle, who at once practised the craft of a miller, and sold home-brewed ale. To this house, Grahame and his brother-in-law, the farmer of Duquhat (which lies between Kirkoswald and Shanter), used to resort; and finding in Burns some qualities which, boy as he was, recommended him to their attention, they made him every thing but their drinking companion. Sometimes, the two topers, tired of ale, which they said was rather cold for the stomach, would adjourn to Duquhat, and correct their native liquor with good brandy, which at that time was supplied by smugglers to every house in Carrick at a price next to nominal. Burns would accompany them in these migrations, an observant boy, inspecting the actions of his dotard seniors. After spending half a night at Duquhat, the farmer of that place, with Burns, would accompany Grahame to Shanter: but as the idea of the "sulky sullen dame" rose in their minds, a debate would arise as to the propriety of venturing, even in full strength, into the house, and Grahame would, after all, return to Duquhat, and continue the debauch till next day; content to put off the present evil, even at the hazard of encountering it in an accumulated form afterwards. Such were the opportunities afforded to the poet of observing the life of the Carrick farmers of those days.

Regarding the identity of the hero of the tale, the following conclusive evidence is given:—

SWINDRIDGE MUIR, 13*th January*, 1829.

SIR,

As I understand you wish to be informed of what I know of the identity of the person designated Tam o' Shanter, in Burns' celebrated poem of that name, I shall cheerfully communicate all I know on the subject. Having met with the poet at the house of Sir W. Cunningham of Robertland, which I was frequently in the way of doing, he (Burns) at request produced the poem. All the company present seemed to have some previous knowledge of it excepting myself. I asked who was the person therein represented as *Tam*. Burns replied, "Who could it be but the guidman o' Shanter?—a man well acquainted with the freaks and pranks of the infernal crew;" and in the course of conversation I found this person to be Douglas Grahame. This was previous to his having sent a copy to Captain Grose, for whom it was particularly intended. Next morning I received a copy from the poet himself; and to the best of my recollection there were also present at the time the late Dr. Hamilton, Kilmarnock, and Dr. M'Kenzie, then in Mauchline, now in Edinburgh. And I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

JOHN SMITH.

TO MR. DAVID AULD,
Merchant, Ayr.

FROM MAJOR WM. NEILL, OF BARNWELL,

AYR, 28*th January*, 1829.

MR. DAVID AULD,

SIR,—In corroboration of what Mr. Smith states relating to the identity of Tam o' Shanter, I have had a conversation with Mrs. Jean Doak, a person of great respectability; she was brought up with an aunt, who lived at the farm of Forncalloch in the neighbourhood of Kirkoswald. She was there at the time Burns attended Mr. Rodger's school at Kirkoswald, and resided with his uncle Mr. Samuel Brown in Ballochmyle.

Douglas Grahame, then, and for some time afterwards, lived in the farm of Shanter. He was currently known in the neighbourhood as the *Tam* of the Poet; an appellation, however, no one durst apply to his face, as whatever honour may attach to it now, it was not a joke at all relished by the honest farmer. Mrs. Doak has known Shanter all her life.

I am, dear Sir, Your most obedient servant,
WM. NEILL.]

† [The village where a parish church is situated is usually called the Kirkton in Scotland. A certain Jean Kennedy, who kept a reputable public-house in the village of Kirkoswald, is here alluded to.]

‡ ["Alloway Kirk, with its little enclosed burial-ground, next demands the pilgrim's attention. It has long been roofless, but the walls are pretty well preserved, and it still retains its bell at the east end. Upon the whole, the spectator is struck with the idea that the witches must have had a rather narrow stage for the performance of their revels, as described in the poem. The inner area is now divided by a partition-wall, and one part forms the family burial-place of the late Mr. Cathcart, who may perhaps be better known by his judicial designation of Lord Alloway. The 'winnock bunker in the east,' where sat the awful musician of the party, is a conspicuous feature, being a small window, divided by a thick mullion. Around the building are the vestiges of other openings, at any of which the hero of the tale may be supposed to have looked in upon the hellish scene. Within the last few years the old oaken rafters of the kirk were mostly entire, but they have now been entirely taken away, to form, in various shapes, memorials of a place so remarkably signalized by genius. It is necessary for those who survey the ground, in reference to the poem, to be informed that the old road from Ayr to this spot, by which Burns supposed his hero to have approached Alloway Kirk, was considerably to the west of the present one, which, nevertheless, existed before the time of Burns. Upon a field about a quarter of a mile to the north-west of the kirk, is a single tree enclosed with a paling, the last remnant of a group which covered

'———————— the cairn
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;'

and immediately beyond that object is

'———————— the foord,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;'

(namely, a ford over a small burn which soon after joins the Doon); being two places which Tam o' Shanter is described as having passed on his solitary way. The road then made a sweep towards the river, and, passing a well which trickles down into the Doon, where formerly stood a thorn, on which an individual, called in the poem "Mungo's mither," committed suicide, approached Alloway Kirk upon the west. It is surprising with what interest any visiter to the real scene inquires into and beholds every part of it which can be associated, however remotely, with the poem of 'Tam o' Shanter.' The churchyard contains several old monuments, of a very humble description, marking the resting-places of undistinguished persons, who formerly lived in the neighbourhood, and had the usual hereditary title to little spaces of ground in this ancient cemetery. Among those persons rests William Burness, father of the Poet, over whose grave the son had piously raised a small stone, recording his name and the date of his death, together with the short poetical tribute to his memory which is inserted in the works of the Bard.

How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
An' at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou' for weeks thegither!
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
An' aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious;
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious;
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle—
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy!
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed!
Or like the snowfall in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide;—
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
An' sic a night he tak's the road in
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The De'il had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub an' mire,
Despising wind, an' rain, an' fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists an' houlets nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the foord,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
An' past the birks an' meikle stane,
Whare drucken Charlie brak 's neck-bane;
An' thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
An' near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—
Before him Doon pours a' his floods;
The doublin' storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash frae pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmerin' thro' the groanin' trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancin',
An' loud resounded mirth an' dancin'.—

Inspirin' bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou can'st mak us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae we'll face the Devil!—
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na de'ils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
'Till, by the heel an' hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
An', wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks an' witches in a dance;
Nae cotillon brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, an' reels,
Put life an' mettle i' their heels:
At winnock-bunker i' the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, an' large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round, like open presses;
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some dev'lish cantraip slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—

This monument has been long ago destroyed and carried away piece-meal, and there is now substituted for it one of somewhat finer proportions. But the churchyard of Alloway has now become fashionable for the dead as well as the living. Its little area is absolutely crowded with modern monuments, referring to persons, many of whom have been brought from considerable distances to take their rest in this doubly consecrated ground. Among these is one to the memory of a person named Tyrie, who, visiting the spot some years ago, happened to express a wish that he might be laid in Alloway churchyard, and, as fate would have it, was interred in the spot he had pointed out within a fortnight. Nor is this all; for even the neighbouring gentry are now contending for compartments in this fold of the departed, and it is probable that the elegant mausolea of rank and wealth will soon be jostling with the stunted obelisks of humble worth and noteless poverty.

"The Monument alluded to was erected many years ago by subscription, and has subsequently been surrounded by a garden of evergreens. Hardly any object of the kind could be more truly beautiful, or worthy of its purpose, than this happily designed and happily situated building; nor could any thing be more truly entitled to praise than the manner in which it is kept and managed. The interior contains a capital copy of the original portrait of the Poet, by Nasmyth, besides various other objects of less moment. In a grotto apart are now placed the celebrated statues of Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnny, executed by Mr. James Thom, the self-taught sculptor. After performing the tour of the United Kingdom, and gathering a sum little short of five thousand pounds, these singularly felicitous grotesques have been permanently fixed here, being, in fact, the property of the Monument Committee."—CHAMBERS.]

By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted,
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft:
[Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seam'd, like a beggar's clout:
And priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk.]*
Wi' mair o' horrible an' awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, an' curious,
The mirth an' fun grew fast an' furious:
The piper loud an' louder blew,
The dancers quick an' quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
'Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
An' coost her duddies to the wark,
An' linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam! O Tam! had thae been queans
A' plump an' strappin', i' their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld an' droll,
Rigwoodie hags, wad spean a foal,
Lowpin' an' flingin' on a cummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,
"There was ae winsome wench an' walie,"†
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
An' perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
An' shook baith meikle corn an' bear,
An' kept the country-side in fear.)

Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That, while a lassie, she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, an' she was vauntie.—

Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend Grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches,)
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap an' flang,
(A souple jade she was, an' strang,)
An' how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
An' thought his very een enrich'd;
Ev'n Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
An' hotch'd an' blew wi' might an' main:
'Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
An' roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
An' in an instant a' was dark:
An' scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plunderin' herds assail their byke,
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch screech an' hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'lt get thy fairin'!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
An' win the key-stane‡ of the brig;§
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross;
But ere the key-stane she could make
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
An' flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:

* [These additional four lines were, in the original MS., in this place. The Poet omitted them at the suggestion of Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, who observed to him, in a letter, dated March, 1791:—"The descriptive part might perhaps have been better closed after the two following lines,—

'Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu'
Which ev'n to name would be unlawfu','

than the four lines which succeed

'The grey hairs yet stack to the heft,'

which, though good in themselves, yet, as they derive all their merit from the satire they contain, are here rather misplaced, among the circumstances of pure horror." To which Burns replied, "As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there. One of them, the hit at the Lawyer and the Priest, I shall cut out."]

† Allan Ramsay.

‡ It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller that, when he falls in with *bogles*, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—R. B.

§ The Auld Brig of Doon, which is approached by a steep way, forming Tam's line of march when pursued by the witches, and which is connected with the road by a sharp turn that may be conceived to have given that hero some trouble in a gallop, is a fine old arch, of apparently very

The carlin claught her by the rump,
An' left poor Maggie scarce a stump.*

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, take heed:
Whane'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run i' your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear—
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

[The Poet in his manuscript thus intimates the localities of the tale.—"Alloway Kirk, the scene of the following poem is an old ruin in Ayr-shire, hard by the great road from Ayr to Maybole, on the banks of the river Doon, and near the old bridge of that name."

"In the inimitable tale of Tam o' Shanter," says Sir Walter Scott, "Burns has left us sufficient evidence of his ability to combine the ludicrous with the awful, and even the horrible. No Poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions."

"I shall not presume to say," observes Lord Byron, in his controversy with Bowles, "that Pope is as high a poet as Shakspeare and Milton. I would no more say this than I would assert in the mosque—that Socrates was a greater man than Mahomet. But if I say that he is very near them, it is no more than has been asserted of Burns, who is supposed

'To rival all but Shakspeare's name below.'

I say nothing against this opinion. But of what '*order*,' according to the poetical aristocracy, are Burns's poems? There are his *opus magnum* 'Tam o' Shanter,' a *tale:* 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' a descriptive sketch: some others in the same style; the rest are songs. So much for the *rank* of his productions: the *rank* of Burns is the very first of his art."

"Burns has given an elixir of life to his native dialect. The Scottish Tam o' Shanter will be read as long as any production of the same century. The impression of his genius is deep and universal. Into Tam o' Shanter he has poured the whole witchery of song,—humourous, gay, gloomy, terrific, and sublime."—CAMPBELL.

"Who but some impenetrable dunce," observes Wordsworth, "or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o' Shanter? The Poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset, that his hero was a desperate and Scottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups while the storm is roaring and heaven and earth are in confusion; the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate; conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence: selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors

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durable workmanship, and, though disused, except for foot passengers, is kept in excellent order. Some years ago the parapets had suffered considerable injury by many of the coping-stones being thrown into the water by idle boys; but at the instigation of Mr. David Auld, of Ayr, a poetical petition to the Trustees was written by the Rev. Mr. Paul, of Broughton, author of a Life of Burns, with the view of obtaining the means of repairing it. On this document being presented to a meeting of the Trustees at Ayr, it was found that they had no power to devote the public money to the repair of a disused road; but the eight or ten gentlemen present were so much amused by the petition, and at the same time so convinced by its arguments, that they subscribed, on the spot, a sum sufficient to put all to rights. The document is here subjoined in full form;—

"*Unto the Honourable the Trustees of the Roads, in the County of Ayr; the Petition and complaint of the Auld Brig of Doon.*

MUST I, like modern fabrics of a day,
Decline, unwept, the victim of decay?
Shall my bold arch, that proudly stretches o'er
Doon's classic streams, from Kyle to Carrick's shore,
Be suffer'd in oblivion's gulf to fall,
And hurl to wreck my venerable wall?
Forbid it! every tutelary power!
That guards my *key-stane* at the midnight hour;
Forbid it! ye who, charm'd by Burns's lay,
Amid these scenes can linger out the day!
Let Nannie's sark, and Maggie's mangled tail,
Plead in my cause, and in that cause prevail.
The man of taste who comes my form to see,
And curious asks, but asks in vain, for me,
With tears of sorrow will my fate deplore,
When he is told, 'The Auld Brig is no more.'
Stop, then—O, stop the more than Vandal rage
That marks this revolutionary age,
And bid the structure of your fathers last,
The pride of this, the boast of ages past;
Nor ever let your children's children tell,
'By your decree, the fine Old Fabric fell.'

May it therefore please your Honours to consider this Petition, and grant such sum as you may think proper for repairing and keeping up the Auld Brig of Doon.

(Signed) DAVID AULD,
For the Petitioner."

* ["Among the facts, which must have gone to the composition of "Tam o' Shanter," there is one which probably suggested the tail-piece with which the diabolic panorama is concluded. Douglas Grahame had, it seems, a good grey mare, which was very much identified with his own appearance. One day, being in Ayr, he tied the animal to a ring at the door of a public-house, where, contrary to his original intentions, he tarried so long, that the boys, in the meantime, plucked away the whole of his mare's tail, for the purpose of making fishing lines. It was not till the next morning, when he awoke from a protracted bouse, that the circumstance was discovered by his son, who came in, crying that the mare had lost her tail. Grahame, when he comprehended the amount of the disaster, was, it seems, so much bewildered as to its cause that he could only attribute it, after a round oath, to the agency of witches. There can be no doubt, we think, that this affair, working in Burns's recollection, was seized upon to serve as the catastrophe of a story, of which the main part, it is well known, was a fire-side legend, respecting a person of unknown name and character."—CUNNINGHAM.]

only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within. —I pity him who cannot perceive that in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect:—

> 'Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the *ills* of life victorious.' "

"When my father," says Gilbert Burns, "feued his little property near Alloway Kirk, the wall of the church-yard had gone to ruin. My father, with two or three other neighbours, joined in an application to the town council of Ayr, who were superiors of the adjoining land, for liberty to rebuild it, and raised by subscription a sum for enclosing this ancient cemetery with a wall; hence he came to consider it as his burial-place, and we learned that reverence for it that people generally have for the burial place of their ancestors. My brother was living in Ellisland, when Captain Grose, on his peregrinations through Scotland, staid some time at Carse-House in the neighbourhood, with Captain Robert Riddel, of Glenriddel, a particular friend of my brother. The antiquarian and the Poet were 'unco pack and thick thegither.' Robert requested of Captain Grose, when he should come to Ayr-shire, that he would make a drawing of Alloway Kirk, as it was the burial place of his father, and where he himself had a sort of claim to lay down his bones when they should be no longer serviceable to him; and added, by way of encouragement, that it was the scene of many a good story of witches and apparitions, of which he knew the Captain was very fond. The Captain agreed to the request, provided the Poet would furnish a witch story, to be printed along with it. 'Tam o' Shanter' was produced on this occasion, and was first published in Grose's Antiquities of Scotland.

"The poem is founded on a traditional story. The leading circumstances of a man riding home very late from Ayr, in a stormy night, his seeing a light in Alloway Kirk, his having the curiosity to look in, his seeing a dance of witches, with the devil playing on the bagpipes to them, the scanty covering of one of the witches, which made him so far forget himself as to cry out:—'Weel loupen, short sark!'—with the melancholy catastrophe of the piece;—it is all a true story, that can be well attested by many respectable old people in that neighbourhood."]

The Poet has, however, himself related the story on which this inimitable production was founded in a letter to Francis Grose, the facetious antiquary.—(See Correspondence, 1792.)

[Tam o' Shanter was composed in November 1790. It was his own favourite poem, and is admitted by universal consent to be the happiest of all his works.

The circumstances were strongly impressed on the mind of Mrs. Burns. The Poet had lingered longer than his wont by the river side, and, taking her children with her, she went out to join him. He was busily engaged crooning to himself, she informed Cromek, and, perceiving that her presence was an interruption, she loitered behind with her little ones among the broom. Her attention was presently attracted by the strange and wild gesticulations of the bard, who now at some distance was agonized with an ungovernable excess of joy. He was reciting very loud, and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, those animated verses which he had just conceived:—

> "Now, Tam! O, Tam! had thae been queans,
> A' plump and strappin' in their teens;
> Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannin,
> Been snaw-white se'enteen hunder linen;
> Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
> That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
> I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,
> For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!"

On going home he embodied the loose fragments which he had pencilled down, with the passages composed in his mind, and the result was the inimitable story as it now stands—admitted by universal consent to be the happiest of all his works. The walk on Nithside, where his wife found him warmed with the inspiration of his subject, and reciting aloud, is kept in kindly remembrance by the people of the valley.]

Address of Beelzebub,

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY.

Long life, my Lord, an' health be yours,
Unskaith'd by hunger'd Highland boors;
Lord grant nae duddie desperate beggar,
Wi' dirk, claymore, or rusty trigger,
May twin auld Scotland o' a life
She likes—as lambkins like a knife.
Faith, you and A———s were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight;
I doubt na! they wad bid nae better
Than let them ance out owre the water;
Then up amang thae lakes and seas
They'll mak' what rules and laws they please;
Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin,
May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin';
Some Washington again may head them,
Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them,
Till God knows what may be effected
When by such heads and hearts directed—
Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
May to Patrician rights aspire!
Nae sage North, now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,
An' whare will ye get Howes and Clintons
To bring them to a right repentance,
To cowe the rebel generation,
An' save the honour o' the nation?
They an' be d——d! what right hae they
To meat or sleep, or light o' day?
Far less to riches, pow'r, or freedom,
But what your lordship likes to gie them?

But hear, my lord! Glengarry, hear!
Your hand's owre light on them, I fear!
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna' say but they do gaylies;
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
An' tirl the hallions to the birses;
Yet while they're only poind't and herriet,
They'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit;
But smash them! crash them a' to spails!
An' rot the dyvors i' the jails!
The young dogs, swinge them to the labour;
Let wark an' hunger mak' them sober!
The hizzies, if they're aughtlins fawsont,
Let them in Drury-lane be lesson'd!
An' if the wives an' dirty brats
E'en thigger at your doors an' yetts,
Flaffan wi' duds an' grey wi' beas',
Frightin' awa your deucks an' geese,
Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,
The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
And gar the tatter'd gypsies pack
Wi' a' their bastards on their back!
Go on, my Lord! I lang to meet you,
An' in my house at hame to greet you;
Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle,
The benmost neuk beside the ingle,
At my right han' assign'd your seat
'Tween Herod's hip an' Polycrate,—
Or if you on your station tarrow,
Between Almagro and Pizarro,
A seat, I'm sure ye're weel deservin't;
An' till ye come—Your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB.*

June 1st, Anno Mundi, 5790.

To John Taylor.

WITH Pegasus upon a day,
Apollo weary flying,
Through frosty hills the journey lay,
On foot the way was plying.

Poor slip-shod giddy Pegasus
Was but a sorry walker;
To Vulcan then Apollo goes,
To get a frosty calker.

Obliging Vulcan fell to work,
Threw by his coat and bonnet,
And did Sol's business in a crack;
Sol paid him with a sonnet.

Ye Vulcan's sons of Wanlockhead,
Pity my sad disaster;
My Pegasus is poorly shod—
I'll pay you like my master.†

ROBERT BURNS.

Ramages, 3 o'clock, (no date.)

Lament of Mary Queen of Scots,

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.‡

I.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

II.

Now lav'rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis, wild wi' mony a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:

* ["The Address of Beelzebub" made its first appearance in the Scots Magazine for February, 1818, printed from the manuscript of Burns, and headed thus;—"To the Right Honourable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honourable and Honourable the Highland Society, which met on the 23d of May last, at the Shakspeare, Covent-Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of five hundred Highlanders, who, as the society were informed by Mr. M———, of A——s, were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters, whose property they were, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. M'Donald, of Glengarry, to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing LIBERTY."

The communication was made by a person under the signature of R. W., who wrote from Ayr;—"The Address of Beelzebub" has never been printed before, and I consider it a duty to preserve from oblivion every production which the public has a claim to inherit, as the legacy of departed genius, unless its publication be offensive to right feeling, or derogatory to the talents and character of the author. You will recognise in it something of the compound vigour of Burns's genius; the rustic but keen severity of his sarcasm, and the manly detestation of oppression, real or supposed, which so strongly characterized him. For your entire satisfaction, I enclose the original in his own handwriting: it was given to me by a friend who got it many years ago from the well-known 'ready-witted Rankine,' the Poet's early and intimate acquaintance."]

† ["The Poet, it seems, during one of his journeys over his ten parishes as an exciseman, had arrived at Wanlockhead on a winter-day, when the roads were slippery with ice, and Jenny Geddes (or Peg Nicholson) kept her feet with difficulty. The blacksmith of the place was busied with other pressing matters in the forge, and could not spare time for 'frosting' the shoes of the Poet's mare, and it is likely he would have proceeded on his dangerous journey, had he not bethought himself of propitiating the son of Vulcan with verse. He called for pen and ink, wrote these verses to John Taylor, a person of influence in Wanlockhead; and when he had done, a gentleman of the name of Sloan, who accompanied him, added these words:—"J. Sloan's best compliments to Mr. Taylor, and it would be doing him and the Ayr-shire Bard a particular favour, if he would oblige them instanter with his agreeable company. The road has been so slippery that the riders and the brutes were equally in danger of getting some of their bones broken. For the Poet, his life and limbs are of some consequence to the world; but for poor Sloan, it matters very little what may become of him. The whole of this business is to ask the favour of getting the horses' shoes sharpened." On the receipt of this, Taylor spoke to the smith; the smith flew to his tools, sharpened the horses' shoes, and, it is recorded, lived thirty years to say he had never been 'weel paid but ance, and that was by the poet, who paid him in money, paid him in drink, and paid him in verse."

Communicated by John Brown, Esq., Ayr. to ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

‡ [The Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, having expressed a wish for a poem on the woes of Queen Mary, Burns, touched with the pathos of Lord Maxwell's "Good Night," composed the "Queen Mary's Lament," with his thoughts on that fine ballad. The Poet was well pleased with his performance.—"Whether it is," he says to Graham of Fintray, "that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar

In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

III.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae;
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang!

IV.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending-care.

V.

But as for thee, thou false woman!—
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae!
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor the balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

VI.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine!
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

VII.

Oh! soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs, that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

The Whistle.

I SING of a whistle, a whistle of worth,
I sing of a whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish king,
And long with this whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda,* still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—
"This whistle's your challenge — to Scotland get o'er,
And drink them to hell, sir, or ne'er see me more!"

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur'd, what champions fell;
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Scaur,
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,
He drank his poor godship as deep as the sea,
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain'd;
Which now in his house has for ages remain'd;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

"By the gods of the ancients!" Glenriddel replies,
"Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,†
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o'er."

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe—or his friend,
Said, toss down the whistle, the prize of the field,
And, knee-deep in claret, he'd die ere he'd yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely dame.

A bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day;

effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have, in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not, but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past." Lady Winifred rewarded the Poet by the present of a valuable snuff-box, with the portrait of Queen Mary on the lid. Burns acknowledged the gift in a letter to the donor, dated Ellisland, January 11th, 1791. Lady Winifred was the daughter and sole heiress of William Maxwell, commonly called Earl of Nithsdale, only son of William, fifth Earl of Nithsdale, who was attainted of high treason in 1716. She died in 1810. When Burns visited Terreagles house, he was shown the bed in which that princess slumbered during one troubled night—an original letter from Charles I., requesting the Earl of Nithsdale to arm and join him in England—and the account written by the Countess of Nithsdale of the last Earl's escape from the Tower, in 1715.]

* See Ossian's Caric-thura.—R. B.

† See Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.—R. B.

A bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And ev'ry new cork is a new spring of joy;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er;
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles a-piece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestors did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high-ruling Elder to wallow in wine!
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with fate and quart-bumpers contend?
Though fate said—a hero shall perish in light;
So up rose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

Next up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink:
"Craigdarroch, thou 'lt soar when creation shall sink!
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime!

"Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce:
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day!"

As the authentic prose history of the "Whistle" is curious, I shall here give it.—In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James the Sixth, there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony whistle, which at the commencement of the orgies he laid on the table, and whoever was the last able to blow it, every body else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the whistle as a trophy of victory. The Dane produced credentials of his victories, without a single defeat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty courts in Germany; and challenged the Scots Bacchanalians to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else of acknowledging their inferiority.—After many overthrows on the part of the Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Lawrie, of Maxwelton, ancestor of the present worthy baronet of that name; who, after three days and three nights' hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table,

"And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill."

Sir Walter, son of Sir Robert before-mentioned, afterwards lost the whistle to Walter Riddel, of Glenriddel, who had married a sister of Sir Walter.—On Friday, the 16th of October, 1790, at Friar's-Carse,* the whistle was once more contended for, as related in the ballad by the present Sir Robert Lawrie, of Maxwelton; Robert Riddel, Esq. of Glenriddel, lineal descendant and representative of Walter Riddel, who won the whistle, and in whose family it had continued; and Alexander Ferguson, Esq. of Craigdarroch, likewise descended of the great Sir Robert; which last gentleman carried off the hard-won honours of the field.—BURNS.

[The whistle is still kept as a great curiosity, and was last in the possession of the late Right Honourable R. Cutlar Ferguson, of Craigdarroch, M. P., son of the victor.]

Elegy on Miss Burnet,

OF MONBODDO.

LIFE ne'er exulted in so rich a prize
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I forget?
In richest ore the brightest jewel set!
In thee, high Heav'n above was truest shown,
As by his noblest work the Godhead best is known.

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye groves;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flow'ry shore,
Ye woodland choir that chant your idle loves,
Ye cease to charm—Eliza is no more!

---

* [The jovial contest took place in the dining-room of Friar's Carse, in the presence of the Bard, who drank bottle for bottle about with them, and seemed quite disposed to take up the conqueror when the day dawned. The peasants of the neighbourhood hearing of the pleasant strife, went in groups to inquire how matters went, and all wished that Glenriddel might win, though they lamented that an elder should engage in such a business. Friar's Carse is one of the loveliest spots on Nithside, The Poet states that the contest took place on 16th October, 1790; but it is evident, from a letter which he wrote to Captain Riddel from Ellisland, on the same day in the preceding year, that it was then intended to be held. Besides, the 16th October, 1790, fell on a Saturday, and not on a Friday. It is probable that the ballad was written in 1789, even if the contest itself did not occur until the following year.]

Ye heathy wastes, immix'd with reedy fens;
Ye mossy streams, with sedge & rushes stor'd;
Ye rugged cliffs, o'erhanging dreary glens,
To you I fly, ye with my soul accord.

Princes, whose cumb'rous pride was all their worth,
Shall venal lays their pompous exit hail?
And thou, sweet excellence! forsake our earth,
And not a muse in honest grief bewail?

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's pride,
And virtue's light, that beams beyond the spheres;
But, like the sun eclips'd at morning tide,
Thou left'st us darkling in a world of tears.

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care;
So deckt the woodbine sweet yon aged tree;
So from it ravish'd, leaves it bleak and bare.*

LAMENT

FOR

James, Earl of Glencairn.†

I.

THE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:
Beneath a craigy steep, a bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en.

II.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleached white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears;
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes alang: —

III.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing
The reliques of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year!
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

IV.

"I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane:
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ithers plant them in my room.

V.

"I've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

VI.

"And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride—his country's stay—
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

VII.

"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair;

* [The father of the beautiful and accomplished Elizabeth Burnet was Lord Monboddo, a very eccentric nobleman: he was at once whimsical and acute; odd in his manners and elegant. He asserted, in his Origin and Progress of Language, that men were originally no better than brutes: alike destitute of reason, language, conscience, and social affection. He had the reputation of giving the most elegant entertainments during his day in the northern metropolis; he had flowers of all hues, and wines of all qualities: odours as well as light were diffused by lamps, nor were his entertainments without the charm of music. In domestic circumstances, Monboddo was particularly unfortunate. His wife, a very beautiful woman, died in child-bed. His son, a very promising boy, in whose education he took great delight, was likewise snatched from his affections by a premature death; and his second daughter, in personal loveliness one of the first women of the age, was cut off by consumption when only twenty-five years old. In his address to Edinburgh, the Poet thus alludes to this charming lady.—

"Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own his work indeed divine."]

† [With James Cunningham, Earl of Glencairn, perished the last hope of Burns, of obtaining "a pension, post, or place" in his native land. He was generous and accomplished, and admired the Poet through his poetry; the last of the male line of the family became extinct by the death of this Earl's brother; the title has lain dormant since. The Glencairn Cunninghams are descended from Warnebald de Cunningham, a Norman, the companion of Hugh de Morville, Constable of Scotland, who died in 1162. They were distinguished in the border wars; and Alexander, the fifth Earl, a warrior, a poet, and a reformer, was one of the most active of the leaders of the Congregation, and undertook and accomplished some hazardous enterprises. Another of the line resisted, with much gallantry, the English under the Parliamentary leaders, and obtained the praise of Clarendon. The family, never rich, became very poor, and one of the Earls married a musician's daughter, with a handsome fortune. A son of this marriage was at a ball in Edinburgh, when a dispute arose between him and one of the Kennedys of Cassillis, regarding a suitable tune for the dance.—"I wish," said Cassillis, "that we had your grandfather here; he was skilful, I have heard."—"Yes," retorted Glencarin, "he excelled all the west in playing Johnny Faa." A duel was the consequence.]

Awake! resound thy latest lay—
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the bard
Thou brought from fortune's mirkest gloom.

VIII.

"In poverty's low barren vale
Thick mists, obscure, involv'd me round;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun,
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

IX.

"Oh! why has worth so short a date?
While villains ripen grey with time;
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime!
Why did I live to see that day?
A day to me so full of woe!—
Oh! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

X.

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen:
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!" *

[Burns sent this Lament to lady Elizabeth Cunningham, the sister and eventually co-heiress of James, 14th Earl of Glencairn, who died 30th January, 1791, with a letter, in which he says:—"My heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his Lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his Lordship's memory were not the 'mockery of woe.' Nor shall my gratitude perish with me! If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!" Lady Elizabeth Cunningham, died, unmarried, in 1804. The poet's gratitude did not die with his noble patron. He named his youngest son, James Glencairn. He is now a Major in the service of the East India Company.]

LINES SENT TO
Sir John Whitefoord, Bart.
OF
WHITEFOORD; †
WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

THOU, who thy honour as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The friend thou valued'st, I, the patron, loved;
His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd.
We'll mourn till we, too, go as he has gone,
And tread the dreary path to that dark world unknown.

ADDRESS
TO
The Shade of Thomson,
ON
CROWNING HIS BUST, AT EDNAM, ROXBURGH-SHIRE, WITH BAYS. ‡

WHILE virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between:

While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade:

---

* ["In this poem, we have a beautiful instance how sweetly and sincerely Burns wrote from the heart. Love, kindness, and gratitude were congenial to his nature; he lived and breathed in them. In the last stanza the poet shows how closely he could approach the genuine simplicity and touching pathos of our early song."—ETTRICK SHEPHERD.]

† Sir John Whitefoord, to whom Burns enclosed a copy of his "Lament for the Earl of Glencairn," was one of his earliest and most valuable patrons. On receipt of the above, Sir John wrote to the poet as follows;—

"*Near Maybole, October* 16, 1791.

"Sir,—Accept of my thanks for your favour, with the *Lament* on the death of my much esteemed friend, and your worthy patron, the perusal of which pleased and affected me much. The lines addressed to me are very flattering.

"I have always thought it most natural to suppose (and a strong argument in favour of a future existence) that, when we see an honourable and virtuous man labouring under bodily infirmities, and oppressed by the frowns of fortune in this world, there was a happier state beyond the grave, where that worth and honour, which are neglected here, would meet with their just reward, and where temporal misfortunes would receive an eternal recompense. Let us cherish this hope for our departed friend, and moderate our grief for that loss we have sustained, knowing that he cannot return to us, but we may go to him.

"Remember me to your wife, and with every good wish for the prosperity of you and your family, believe me, at all times, Your most sincere friend.

JOHN WHITEFOORD."

‡ [On this occasion the Poet was honoured with an invitation from the Earl of Buchan, "to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson, on Ednam Hill, on the 22nd of September, 1791; for which day perhaps his muse may inspire an ode suited to the occasion." See his letter, together with the answer of the poet, in the Correspondence of that year. The poet appeared to be highly flattered by the invitation, but declined it, saying that a week's absence in the middle of the harvest was a step he durst not venture upon—but he sent this poem.]

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed:*

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the year!
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.

THIRD EPISTLE
To Robert Graham, Esq.,
OF
FINTRAY.†

LATE crippl'd of an arm, and now a leg,‡
About to beg a pass for leave to beg:
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and deprest
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest);
Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail?
(It soothes poor misery, heark'ning to her tale,)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature! partial Nature! I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain.
The lion and the bull thy care have found,§
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground:
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell;
Thy minions, kings defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power;
Foxes and statesmen subtle wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes are snug;
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,‖ [darts.
Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and
But, oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
And half an idiot, too, more helpless still;
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
No claws to dig, his hated¶ sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,**
Clad in rich dullness' comfortable fur;—
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry side;
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics!—appall'd I venture on the name,
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame:
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes!
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose.

His heart by causeless, wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear:
Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd, in th' unequal strife,
The hapless poet flounders on through life;
'Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspir'd,
Low sunk in squalid unprotected age,
Dead, even resentment, for his injur'd page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage.

So, by some hedge, the gen'rous steed deceas'd,
For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast,
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies senseless of each tugging bitch's son.††

Oh dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!

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* The Poet's manuscript affords the following interesting variations;—

While cold-eyed Spring, a virgin coy,
Unfolds her verdant mantle sweet,
Or pranks the sod in frolic joy,
A carpet for her youthful feet:

While Summer, with a matron's grace,
Walks stately in the cooling shade,
And oft, delighted, loves to trace
The progress of the spiky blade:

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
With age's hoary honours clad,
Surveys, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed.

Again;—

While Autumn, by Tweed's fruitful side,
With sober pace, and hoary head,
Surveys, in self-approving pride, &c.—MS.

† The variations here introduced are from a fragment in the poet's hand-writing, entitled "The Poet's Progress, a Poem, in embryo."

‡ Burns wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, on the 7th of February, 1791, "that, by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time," by which he says he had broken his arm; but there is no allusion in his correspondence to any other accident, except in Dec. 1787.

§ VAR.—The peopled fold thy kindly care have found,
The horned bull tremendous spurns the ground;
The lordly lion has enough and more,
The forest trembles at his very roar.

‖ VAR.—Even silly women have defensive arts—
Their eyes, their tongues, and nameless other parts.—MS.

¶ VAR.—Dreaded.—MS.

** VAR.—No nerves olfact'ry, true to Mammon's fool;
Or grunting grub, sagacious evil's* root,

Again,

Or grunting, sage, to grub all evil's* root.

†† In the original manuscript of the poet, the "Sketch of a Character," commencing "A little upright, pert, tart, tripping wight," and the "Lines on William Smellie" are here added.

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* Money the root of all evil.—SCRIPTURE.

Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober selfish ease they sip it up: [serve,
Conscious the bounteous meed* they well de-
They only wonder "some folks" do not starve,
The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
When disappointment snaps the clue† of hope,
And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude that "fools are fortune's care."
So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.‡

Not so the idle muses' mad-cap train, [brain;
Not such the workings of their moon-struck
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hell.§

I dread thee, fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
Already one strong-hold of hope is lost,
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;
(Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears:)
Oh! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!—
Fintray, my other stay, long bless and spare!
Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown;
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

In a letter to Professor Stewart, dated January 20th, 1789, the Poet says, "The piece inscribed to R. G., Esq., is a copy of verses I sent Mr. Graham, of Fintray, accompanying a request for his assistance in a matter to me of very great moment. To that gentleman I am already doubly indebted; for deeds of kindness of serious import to my dearest interests, done in a manner grateful to the delicate feelings of sensibility. This poem is a species of composition new to me, but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the 'Poet's Progress.' (These fragments, if my design succeeds, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions, ripened by years.)"

Sketch of a Character.

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight:
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets,
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets:
A man of fashion, too, he made his tour,
Learn'd *vive la bagatelle, et vive l'amour!*
So travell'd monkies their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore, but little understood;
Veneering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

"The fragment," says Burns to Dugald Stewart, "beginning 'A little, upright, pert, tart, &c.,' I have not shown to man living till I now send it to you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait sketching."]

FOURTH EPISTLE
To Robert Graham, Esq.,
OF
FINTRAY.

I CALL no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled muse may suit a bard that feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver, you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all the other sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me along your wandering spheres,
Only to number out a villain's years!

[These verses were written on receiving the favour which the previous epistle prayed for. Robert Graham of Fintray had the merit of doing all that was done for Burns in the way of raising him out of the toiling humility of his condition, and enabling him to serve the muse without dread of want. Fintray had indeed little in his power; but he exercised his power willingly, and not only obtained the Poet an appointment in the excise, but was instrumental in removing him to a district requiring less personal exertion. Nor should it be forgotten that he defended him with eloquence when imputations were thrown upon his loyalty.]

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* VAR.—Their great success.—MS.

† VAR.—Thread.—MS.

‡ VAR.—Hangs the seeming ox.—MS.

§ All the rest of this poem is yet without form, and void in the pericranium of the Poet.—MS.

A Vision.

As I stood by yon roofless tower,*
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care;

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot alang the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whose distant roaring swells and fa's.†

The cauld blue north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din:
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be. ‡

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His daring look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain,
The sacred posie—"Liberty!"

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumb'ring dead to hear:
But, oh! it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He sang wi' joy this former day,
He, weeping, wail'd his latter times;
But what he said it was nae play,—
I winna ventur't in my rhymes. §

VERSES
TO
John Maxwell of Terraughty. ‖
ON HIS BIRTH-DAY.

HEALTH to the Maxwell's vet'ran chief!
Health, aye unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sybil leaf
This natal morn;
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
Scarce quite half worn.—

This day thou metes three score eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven
(The second sight, ye ken, is given
To ilka Poet)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoure—

But for thy friends, and they are mony,
Baith honest men and lasses bonnie,
May couthie fortune, kind and cannie,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe and e'enings funny,
Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
And then the Deil he daur na steer ye:

---

* The ruins of Lincluden Church near Dumfries.

† VAR.—The burn, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa',
(To join yon river on the Strath,)
Whase roarings seem'd to rise and fa'.

‡ VAR.—Now looking over firth and fauld,
Her horn the pale-fac'd Cynthia rear'd;
When, lo! in form of minstrel auld,
A stern and stalwart ghaist appear'd.

The above fragment was founded on a Poem by Allan Ramsay. The variations, which are taken from a copy in Burns's autograph, agree with the version printed in Johnson's Museum, with the exception of the fifth and sixth verses in the text, which occur neither in the MS. nor in the Museum. In the latter, the Vision is printed to the tune of *Cumnock Psalms*, and has the following chorus:—

A lassie, all alone, was making her moan,
Lamenting our lads beyond the sea;
In the bluidy wars they fa', an' our honours gane an' a',
An' broken-hearted, we maun die.

§ [This splendid vision of Liberty Burns evoked among the ruins of old Lincluden. The scene is chiefly copied from nature; but the wall-flower and the ivy, the distant roaring of the Nith, and the fox howling on the hill, seem rather to point to Sweetheart Abbey. Lincluden was a favourite resort of the Poet; and, indeed, a lovelier spot, or one more suitable for meditation, cannot well be imagined. "To the south," says Macdiarmid, in his pleasing account of the place, "appears the ancient town of Dumfries, distant little more than a mile, the spires of which are seen, and the chime of its bells distinctly heard; the Cluden laves the banks of what must have formed part of the Abbey garden, and, at a point within view, ends its pilgrimage as a separate stream, by murmuring placidly into the bed of the Nith. Beneath, is a fertile haugh or holm, bounded by the newly united streams around: pointing to the south-east are the remains of a bowling-green and flower-garden, the parterres and scrolls of which were visible in 1789; and beyond, an artificial mount, with its spiral walk, turf seat, and tufted trees, once the favourite resort of nuns and monks, and affording a delightful prospect of the surrounding country."

Lincluden was founded by one of the Lords of Galloway in the reign of Malcolm the Fourth—very richly endowed, and tenanted till the year 1400 by Benedictine nuns. The licentious manners of those persons so exasperated Archibald Douglas, surnamed the Grim, that he turned them out, and changed it to a college, with a provost and twelve bedesmen. The structure was once a noble one—the ruins are still majestic. It measured 162 feet from north to south, 116 from east to west, and its principal tower rose 100 feet in height. The style is pure Gothic; the choir was rich in carving and sculpture; the roof was treble, and the corbels, from which the ribs of the arches sprung, were grotesquely cut into ribs or shields.]

‖ [John Maxwell, of Terraughty and Munshes, to whom these verses are addressed, was one of the most remarkable men of his day. He was descended from the Earls of Nithsdale: he shared also in the blood of the house of Herries; but he cared little about lineage, and claimed merit only from a judgment sound and clear—a knowledge of business which penetrated into all the concerns of life, and a skill in handling the most difficult subjects, which was considered unrivalled. He cared for no one's good word—he regarded no one's ill will—flattery and censure were alike lost on him; under an austere manner he hid much kindness of heart, and was in a fair way of doing an act of gentleness when he spoke sternly and peremptorily. He loved to meet Burns; not that he either cared for, or comprehended, poetry; but he was pleased with his knowledge of human nature, and with the keen and piercing remarks in which he indulged. The laird of Terraughty was seventy-one years old when these verses were written. He survived the Poet twenty years."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

Your friends aye love, your faes aye fear ye;
For me, shame fa' me,
If niest my heart I dinna wear ye,
While BURNS they ca' me!

The Rights of Woman,

AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE* ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT.

WHILE Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
The fate of empires and the fall of kings;
While quacks of state must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp the Rights of Man;
Amid this mighty fuss, just let me mention,
The Rights of Woman merit some attention.†

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connexion,
One sacred Right of Woman is, protection.
The tender flower that lifts its head, elate,
Helpless, must fall before the blasts of fate,
Sunk on the earth, defac'd its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending storm.

Our second Right—but needless,‡ here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion,
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong it—'tis decorum.—
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough, rude man had naughty ways;
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, §kick up a riot,
Nay, even thus invade a lady's quiet!—

Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times are fled;
Now, well-bred men—and ye are all well-bred!
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct, neither spirit, wit, nor manners.‖

For Right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest,
Which even the Rights of Kings in low prostration
Most humbly own ¶—'tis dear, dear admiration!
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life—immortal love.—
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs,
'Gainst such a host what flinty savage dares—
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms,
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions!
Let Majesty your first attention summon,
Ah! ça ira! THE MAJESTY OF WOMAN!

The Poet enclosed the above Prologue to Miss Fontenelle, in the following letter:—Madam, In such a bad world as ours, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures are positively our benefactors. To you, Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms, as a woman, would insure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would secure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning or insidious compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of Nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the enclosed lines be of any service to you on your approaching benefit night? If they will, I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore: I know they have no great merit; but, though they shall add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honour to be, &c., ROBERT BURNS.

MONODY
ON
A Lady famed for her Caprice.

How cold is that bosom which folly once fir'd,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd!
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tir'd,
How dull is that ear which to flattery so listen'd!

If sorrow and anguish their exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection remov'd;
How doubly severer, Eliza, thy fate,
Thou diedst unwept as thou livedst unlov'd.

Loves, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on you;
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a tear:
But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Eliza's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We'll roam through the forest for each idle weed;
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none e'er approach'd her but ru'd the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay;
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre;
There keen Indignation shall dart on her prey,
Which spurning Contempt shall redeem from his ire.

---

* [The lady, for whom these verses were written, was young and pretty, and indulged in levities both of speech and action. The Rights of Man had been advocated by Paine; the Rights of Woman had been urged with earnest vehemence by Mary Wolstonecroft, and nothing was talked of but moral and political regeneration. The Poet, with some skill, availed himself of the ruling sentiment of the time, and made the actress claim protection for the merits of tender helpless woman—protection decorously bestowed, unaccompanied by rudeness. The address was well received by the audience; the ironical allusion to the annual Saturnulia of the Caledonian Hunt was understood, and, with the exception of a solitary hiss or two, was rapturously applauded by pit and galleries. The public mind was then in a feverish state, and very easily moved: the line—

"But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,"

was eagerly caught up, and had some sharp disapprobation bestowed on it, till the happy turn of the succeeding lines restored harmony.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† VAR.—Claim some small attention.—MS

‡ VAR.—Idle.—MS.

§ VAR.—Got drunk, would swagger, swear.—MS.

‖ Ironical allusion to the Saturnalia of the Caledonian Hunt.

¶ VAR.—Must fall before.—MS.

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly, gay in life's beam:
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her esteem.*

Epistle from Esopus to Maria.†

From those drear solitudes and frowsy cells,
Where infamy with sad repentance dwells;
Where turnkeys make the jealous mortal fast,
And deal from iron hands the spare repast;
Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
Blush at the curious stranger peeping in;
Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
Resolve to drink, nay, half to whore, no more;
Where tiny thieves, not destin'd yet to swing,
Beat hemp for others, riper for the string:
From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

"Alas! I feel I am no actor here!"
'Tis real hangmen real scourges bear!
Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
Will turn thy very rouge to deadly pale;
Will make thy hair, tho' erst from gipsy poll'd,
By barber woven, and by barber sold,
Though twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care,
Like hoary bristles to erect and stare.
The hero of the mimic scene, no more
I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar;
Or haughty chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
In Highland bonnet woo Malvina's charms;
Whilst sans culottes stoop up the mountain high,
And steal from me Maria's prying eye,
Blest Highland bonnet! Once my proudest dress,
Now prouder still, Maria's temples press.
I see her wave thy towering plumes afar,
And call each coxcomb to the wordy war;
I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,‡
And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze;
The crafty colonel § leaves the tartan'd lines,
For other wars, where he a hero shines;
The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head;
Comes, 'mid a string of coxcombs, to display
That *veni, vidi, vici*, is his way;
The shrinking bard adown an alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks:
Though there, his heresies in church and state
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate:
Still she undaunted reels and rattles on,
And dares the public like a noontide sun.
(What scandal called Maria's janty stagger
The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger?
Whose spleen e'en worse than Burns' venom
He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,—[when
And pours his vengeance in the burning line,
Who christen'd thus Maria's lyre divine;
The idiot strum of vanity bemused,
And even th' abuse of poesy abused!
Who call'd her verse a parish workhouse, made
For motley, foundling fancies, stolen or stray'd?)
A workhouse! ha, that sound awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose!
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowsy couch in sorrow steep!

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* [In this sharp lampoon, Burns satirizes a young and beautiful lady: a wit and a poetess—Mrs. Riddel of Woodlee-Park, now Goldielee. She had incurred his displeasure by smiling upon those "epauletted coxcombs," more than he thought respectful to his own deserts. On one occasion the Poet attempted to salute her, but she punished the insult by withdrawing her friendship for a time. He had his revenge by charging her in these verses with caprice. In the copy of this lampoon which Burns sent to John M'Murdo of Drumlanrig, the name is written Maria; it differs in nothing, save a single word, from the version now given. The lady lived to forgive and forget the bitterness of the Bard. Mrs. Riddel was the lady whom Burns, in his last illness at Brow, asked mournfully if she had any commands for the other world. She possessed a fine library, and was in the habit of lending him books. She was an elegant scholar, and sometimes translated from French or Italian, or Latin verse for his amusement. In the inscription which she wrote for a hermitage in one of the West India Isles, of which she was a native, there are many beautiful lines:—

"Soon as Aurora wakes the dawn,
I press with nimble feet the lawn,
Eager to deck the favourite bower
With every opening bud and flower;
Explore each short and balmy sweet,
To scatter o'er my mossy seat;
And teach around in wreaths to stray
The rich pomegranates pliant spray;
At noon reclin'd in yonder glade,
Panting beneath the tamarind's shade;
Or where the palm-tree's nodding head
Guards from the sun my verdant bed,
I quaff, to slake my thirsty soul,
The cocoa's full nectareous bowl.
At eve beneath some spreading tree,
I read the inspired poesie
Of Milton, Pope, or Spenser mild,
And Shakspeare, Fancy's brightest child:
To tender Sterne I lend an ear,
Or drop o'er Héloise the tear;
Sometimes with Anna tune the lay,
And doze in song the cheerful day."

Mrs. Riddel deeply lamented the fate of Burns, as appears by the following verses, dated Nithside, 1796; which point to his grave:—

"Despairing I rove by this still running stream,
While Corin's sad fate is for ever my theme;
For 'twas here we oft wander'd the long summer days,
And each vale *then* harmonious re-echo'd his lays;
The woods with delight bow'd their tops to his song,
While the streamlet responsive ran murmuring along;
The songsters were mute when he tun'd his soft reed,
And fays danc'd round on the green chequer'd mead."]

† [The Esopus of this strange epistle was Williamson the actor, and the Maria to whom it is addressed was Mrs. Riddel, a lady whose memory will be held in grateful remembrance, not only for her having forgiven the Poet for his lampoons, but for her having written a sensible, clear, heart-warm account of him when laid in the grave. Nor did her kindness stop there: she stirred herself actively in promoting the welfare of his widow and children; she maintained a long correspondence with the eminent sculptor, Banks, respecting a proper memorial to the memory of Burns—on which she displayed much good sense and good feeling, and she communicated to Currie many traits of his character and habits of composition.

It must be confessed that neither the subject nor the style of this parody, on the beginning of Pope's version of Eloise's Epistle to Abelard, appear to be particularly suited for a lady's perusal.]

‡ Gillespie. § Colonel M'Dowall of Logan.

That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.

Why, Lonsdale, thus, thy wrath on vagrants pour,
Must earth no rascal save thyself endure?
Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell,
And make a vast monopoly of hell?
Thou know'st the virtues cannot hate thee worse,
The vices also, must they club their curse?
Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all?

Maria, send me too thy griefs and cares;
In all of thee sure thy Esopus shares.
As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
Who on my fair one satire's vengeance hurls?
Who calls thee pert, affected, vain coquette,
A wit in folly, and a fool in wit?
Who says, that fool alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treacheries to prove it true?
Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born:
For who can write and speak as thou and I?
My periods that decyphering defy, reply.
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all

Poem on Pastoral Poetry.

Hail, Poesie! thou nymph reserv'd!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerv'd
Frae common sense, or sunk ennerv'd
'Mang heaps o' clavers;
And och! owre aft thy joes hae starv'd,
Mid a' thy favours!

Say, lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang
To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakspeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, 'till him rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches;
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin' patches
O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
And rural grace;
And wi' the far-fam'd Grecian share
A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan—
There's ane; come forrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behint the hallan,
A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tantallan,
But thou's for ever!

Thou paints auld nature to the nines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonnie lasses bleach their claes;
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
Wi' hawthorns grey,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are nature's sel';
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
O' witchin' love;
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

[This poem was found by Dr. Currie among the papers of the Poet, and in his own handwriting: but Gilbert Burns says—"There is some doubt of its being his." The second verse alone would go far to remove all doubts: the lines, too, which characterize the Pastorals of Pope, and the concluding stanza of the poem, bear the Burns' stamp, which no one has been successful in counterfeiting.]

ON THE

Illness of a Favourite Child.

Now health forsakes that angel face,
Nae mair my dearie smiles;
Pale sickness withers ilka grace,
And a' my hopes beguiles.

The cruel Powers reject the prayer
I hourly mak' for thee!
Ye heavens, how great is my despair,
How can I see him die!—

Sonnet,

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN A MORNING WALK.
WRITTEN JAN. 25, 1793, THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE AUTHOR, R. B., AGED 34.

Sing on, sweet Thrush, upon the leafless bough;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:
See, aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blithe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds the orient skies!

Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care;
The mite high Heav'n bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll share.*

SONNET,
ON
The Death of Robert Riddel, Esq.
OF GLENRIDDEL.†
APRIL, 1794.

No more, ye warblers of the wood—no more!
Nor pour your descant, grating, on my soul:
Thou young-eyed Spring, gay in thy verdant stole,
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flow'rs, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend!
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round th' untimely tomb where Riddel lies!

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe!
And soothe the Virtues weeping on his bier:
The Man of Worth, who has not left his peer,
Is in his "narrow house" for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet,
Me, mem'ry of my loss will only meet.

IMPROMPTU
On Mrs. Riddel's Birthday,
NOVEMBER 4TH, 1793.

Old Winter, with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferr'd,—
"What have I done, of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?
My cheerless suns no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drags, dreary, slow;
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English, hanging, drowning.

Now, Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To conterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!
That brilliant gift shall so enrich me,
Spring, summer, autumn, cannot match me."
"'Tis done!" says Jove; so ends my story,
And Winter once rejoic'd in glory. ‡

Liberty,
A FRAGMENT

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of Freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!
Beneath the hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.
Is this the power in Freedom's war,
That wont to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,
That arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,
Brav'd usurpation's boldest daring!
One quench'd in darkness, like the sinking star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.

This was the commencement of a poem intended to commemorate the liberty which America had achieved for herself under Washington and Franklin. Fragmentary strains were numerous among the Poet's papers:—"The following lines," says Cromek, "were found on looking over his library, written with

* ["These lines were written opposite the College of Lincluden, close by the side of the Nith—the favourite winter, as well as summer, resort of the Poet. In the summer he loved it, for then the ground was covered with daisies and wild hyacinths: the odour of the honey-suckle came from the thorn, and the song of the birds from the romantic groves, which, as with a garland, enclose the ruins of Lincluden; and in the winter he loved to look on the mingling waters of the Cluden and Nith, see them swelling from bank to brae, bearing down trees they had rooted out, or sheets of ice which rains and thaws had loosened.

"That Burns loved 'Winter, with her angry howl,' evidence may be almost every where found in his earlier poems. There was something of the farmer as well as the moralizing poet in this; labour was then almost at a stand: the plough was frozen up, the corn was stacked, and, probably, thrashed and sold, and, till spring came and pushed the plough-share into the earth, the poet-farmer might indulge in his musings by leafless woods, through which the wind was howling, or by river-banks when the streams were red and raving; or give his fancy an airing during an interval of wind and rain, when a thrush—

'Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree,'

came forth like himself to sing from "fulness of heart.'"
ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

On the original MS. of this Sonnet is written "To *Mr. Syme, from the Author.*"

† ["Robert Riddel, Esq. of Friars-Carse, a very worthy character, and one to whom Burns thought himself under many obligations. It is a curious circumstance that the two concluding lines express a sentiment exactly similar to one of the most beautiful passages in the "Pastor Fido," from the 7th to the 10th line of the Monologue, at the opening of the 3d Act: yet Burns had no acquaintance with Guarini's work. Feeling dictates to genius in all ages, and all countries, and her language must be often the same.

"Riddel was one of those gentlemen who love to live on their own property, and unite the pursuits of literature with the improvement of their estates. He did more than this; he desired to augment the happiness and better the condition of his husbandmen and cotters, and also to spread knowledge among them. It is true that his dependants did not always appreciate his motives, or sympathize in his taste; he experienced to the full the vulgar prejudice entertained by the peasantry against all who indulge in antiquarian researches; the 'queer stones and hog-troughs' collected by the Laird of Friar's-Carse were matters of merriment to his neighbours."—CUNNINGHAM.]

‡ [Compliments, such as these lines bestow, enabled Mrs. Riddel, to whom they were addressed, to endure with better grace the sarcastic verses "To a Lady fam'd for her Caprice." It is said that she refrained from showing in any way the pain which the Poet's ungracious lampoons inflicted: she knew his nature, and that the hour of reconciliation was nigh.]

a pencil on a blank leaf prefixed to an edition of Collins' Poems. The first part of the subject is wholly defaced, and the Poet does not seem to have written more than is here given. It is evidently a fragment of the drama of BRUCE, suggested by Lord Buchan, on the model of the 'Masque of Alfred.' This had ever been a favourite theme of Burns' muse, and he had transmitted to his lordship the epic song of 'Bruce to his troops at Bannockburn,' as earnest of his having commenced the undertaking. From so noble a specimen what might not have been expected! especially when we reflect that the subject is not only in itself a grand one, but perfectly in unison with the Poet's character and feelings:—

* * * *

His royal visage seam'd with many a scar,
That Caledonian rear'd his martial form,
Who led the tyrant-quelling war,
Where Bannockburn's ensanguin'd flood
Swell'd with mingling hostile blood,
Soon Edward's myriads struck with deep dismay,
And Scotia's troop of brothers win their way.
(O, glorious deed to bay a tyrant's band!
O, heavenly joy to free our native land!)
While high their mighty chief pour'd on the
doubling storm.

Tragic Fragment.*

ALL devil as I am, a damned wretch,
A harden'd, stubborn, unrepenting villain,
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
And with sincere, tho' unavailing, sighs,
I view the helpless children of distress.
With tears indignant I behold th' oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
Even you, ye helpless crew, I pity you;
Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity;
Ye poor, despis'd, abandon'd, vagabonds,
Whom Vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to Ruin.
—Oh, but for kind, tho' ill-requited, friends,
I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you!
O injur'd God! thy goodness has endow'd me
With talents passing most of my compeers,
Which I in just proportion have abus'd
As far surpassing other common villains,
As Thou in natural parts hadst given me more.

VERSES

To Miss Graham, of Fintray.

WITH A PRESENT OF SONGS.†

HERE, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful‡ numbers join'd,
Accept the gift;—tho' humble he who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast,
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among!
But Peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love, ecstatic, wake his seraph song!

Or Pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest Want the tale of woe § reveals;
While conscious Virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born Piety her sanction seals. ||

THOUGH FICKLE FORTUNE HAS DECEIVED ME.

Though fickle fortune has deceived me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'll act with prudence as far's I'm able,
But, if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.—

[The above was written extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which indeed, threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned already (in common place-book, March 1784), and, though the weather has brightened up a little with me since, yet there has always been a tempest brewing round me in the grim sky of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will, some time or other, perhaps ere long, overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell, to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness.—BURNS.]

The Vowels.

A TALE.

'TWAS where the birch and sounding thong are
The noisy domicile of pedant pride; [ply'd,
Where ignorance her dark'ning vapour throws,
And cruelty directs the thick'ning blows;
Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,

* The Poet has thus introduced the above lines in one of his manuscripts, printed in Cromek's Reliques:
In my early years nothing less would serve me than courting the tragic muse. I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy, forsooth; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for some time threatened us, prevented my farther progress. In those days I never wrote down any thing; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory. The above, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from a great character—great in occasional instances of generosity, and daring at times in villanies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself, as in the words of the fragment.—BURNS.

† VAR.—His Poems.—MS.

‡ VAR.—In strains divine and sacred.—MS.

§ VAR.—Secret tale.—MS.

|| These verses were written by the Poet on the blank side of the title page of a copy of Thomson's Select Scottish Songs, and the volume sent as a present to the daughter of "a much honoured and much valued friend, Mr. Graham of Fintray." "It were to have been wished," says Currie, "that instead of 'ruffian feeling,' the bard had used a less rugged epithet —*e. g.* ruder."

His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling Vowels to account.—

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
And flagrant from the scourge, he grunted *ai!*

Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous race
The jostling tears ran down his honest face!
That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The Pedant stifles keen the Roman sound
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
And next, the title following close behind,
He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.

The cobweb'd Gothic dome resounded, Y!
In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd reply:
The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert,
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art:
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!

As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptiz'd him *eu*, and kick'd him from his sight.*

Verses to John Rankine. †

Ae day, as Death, that grusome carl,
Was driving to the tither warl'
A mixtie-maxtie, motley squad,
And mony a guilt-bespotted lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,
From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that wintles in a halter:
Asham'd himsel' to see the wretches,
He mutters, glowrin' at the bitches,
"By G— I'll not be seen behint them,
Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them,
Without, at least, ae honest man,
To grace this d—d infernal clan."'
By Adamhill a glance he threw,
"L— G—!" quoth he, "I have it now,
There's just the man I want, i'faith!"
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.

On Sensibility.

TO

MY DEAR AND MUCH HONOURED FRIEND, MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

Sensibility, how charming,
Thou, my friend, canst truly tell:
But distress, with horrors arming,
Thou hast also known too well!

Fairest flower, behold the lily,
Blooming in the sunny ray:
Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,
Toiling o'er his little joys:
Hapless bird! a prey the surest,
To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought, the hidden treasure
Finer feelings can bestow;
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.‡

* [The following, described by Burns as "Literary scolding and Hints," forms part of a letter sent to a critic who had taken him to task about obscure language and imperfect grammar. It was communicated by Mr. Laidlaw, Deputy Sheriff-Clerk of Berwick-shire, and may be added as a characteristic note to this odd poem; "Thou eunuch of language! thou Englishman, who never was south the Tweed thou servile echo of fashionable barbarisms; thou quack, vending the nostrums of empirical elocution thou marriage-maker between vowels and consonants, on the Gretna-green of caprice! thou cobbler, botching the flimsy socks of bombast oratory! thou blacksmith, hammering the rivets of absurdity! thou butcher, embruing thy hands in the bowels of orthography! thou arch-heretic in pronunciation! thou pitch-pipe of affected emphasis! thou carpenter, mortising the awkward joints of jarring sentences! thou squeaking dissonance of cadence! thou pimp of gender! thou Lyon Herald to silly etymology! thou antipode of grammar! thou executioner of construction! thou brood of the speech-distracting builders of the Tower of Babel! thou lingual confusion worse confounded! thou scape-gallows from the land of syntax! thou scavenger of mood and tense! thou murderous accoucheur of infant learning; thou *ignis fatuus*, misleading the steps of benighted ignorance! thou pickle-herring in the puppet-show of nonsense! thou faithful recorder of barbarous idiom! thou persecutor of syllabication! thou baleful meteor, foretelling and facilitating the rapid approach of Nox and Erebus."—R.B. The Poet might have exclaimed during this fit of scolding "O for breath to utter!"]

† [The "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine" of Adamhill. These lines were suggested to Burns by the odd sarcastic dream about his being refused admission to the infernal regions because he was one of Lord K—'s damned brutes! Cromek imagines that the first thought of the poem was suggested by Falstaff's account of his ragged recruits,—

"I'll not pass through Coventry with them, that's flat!"

The conception of this invective is generally original; death, in the lines before us, refuses to march his scoundrel victims into the other world; and in the epigram to Grose, the devil is so astonished at the antiquarian's weight and rotundity that he resolves to want him rather than strain himself with such a frightful load!]

‡ [The Poet one day received a letter from Mrs. Dunlop, of which some of the sentiments charmed him so much that he immediately wrote these verses on sensibility, and sent them to his respected friend. It was about this time that Burns became acquainted with the poetry of Cowper: he loved the Task so much that he carried a copy of it usually in his pocket. "Now that I talk of authors," he says to Mrs. Dunlop, "how do you like Cowper; is not the Task a glorious poem? The religion of the Task, bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and nature: the religion that exalts, that ennobles man."

The Poet likewise sent the above to Thomson's Collection. Another copy appears in the Musical Museum, and headed "Sensibility how charming," to the tune of "*Cornwallis's Lament for Colonel Muirhead*," with this slight variation of the second line:—"*Dearest Nancy, thou canst tell.*"]

On the Death of a Favourite Child.*

Oh sweet be thy sleep in the land of the grave,
My dear little angel, for ever;
For ever—oh no! let not man be a slave,
His hopes from existence to sever.

Though cold be the clay where thou pillow'st thy head,
In the dark silent mansions of sorrow,
The spring shall return to thy low narrow bed,
Like the beam of the day-star to-morrow.

The flower-stem shall bloom like thy sweet seraph form,
Ere the spoiler had nipt thee in blossom,
When thou shrunk frae the scowl of the loud winter storm,
And nestled thee close to that bosom.

Oh still I behold thee, all lovely in death,
Reclin'd on the lap of thymother, [stifl'd breath,
When the tear trickl'd bright, when the short
Told how dear ye were aye to each other.

My child, thou art gone to the home of thy rest,
Where suffering no longer can harm ye,
Where the songs of the good, where the hymns of the blest,
Through an endless existence shall charm thee,

While he, thy fond parent, must sighing sojourn,
Through the dire desert regions of sorrow,
O'er the hope and misfortune of being to mourn,
And sigh for this life's latest morrow.

Lines

SENT TO A GENTLEMAN WHOM HE HAD OFFENDED.

The friend whom wild from wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send;
(Not moony madness more astray;)
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine was th' insensate frenzied part!
Ah! why should I such scenes outlive!
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.†

Address,

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT-NIGHT.

December 4, 1795, at the Theatre, Dumfries.

Still anxious to secure your partial favour,
And not less anxious, sure, this night, than ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better;
So sought a Poet, roosted near the skies,
Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;
Said, nothing like his works was ever printed;
And last, my Prologue-business slily hinted.

"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,
"I know your bent—these are no laughing times:
Can you—but, Miss, I own I have my fears,—
Dissolve in pause—and sentimental tears,
With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentance;
Paint Vengeance, as he takes his horrid stand,
Waving on high the desolating brand, [land?"
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty
I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying? [know it;
I'll laugh, that's poz—nay more, the world shall
And so, your servant! gloomy Master Poet!

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,
That Misery's another word for Grief;
I also think—so may I be a bride!
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye;
Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
To make three guineas do the work of five:‡
Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch!
Say, you'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove;
Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
Measur'd in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
Peerest to meditate the healing leap:

* [An only daughter, who died in autumn, 1795, so suddenly, and at so great a distance, as to prevent him from paying her the last sad duties.]

† ["The insensate frenzied part," which the Poet intimates he had acted under the influence of wine, was at the too hospitable table of Mr. Riddel: he was unsparing of speech, and on this occasion spoke of thrones and dominions, and "epauletted puppies" with a sarcastic vehemence offensive to many. Burns had suffered much, and was then suffering on account of his unbridled license of speech; the power of utterance was not given to him that he might conceal his thoughts. The reparation offered in these lines was warmly accepted, and the current of friendship ran smooth as before.]

‡ [Some of the audience on this occasion, who knew the condition of the Bard's affairs, sympathized in these lines:—

"Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye."

At this time Burns had suffered much affliction in the loss of a favourite child, and from ill health in his own person; and in his own words:—

'In faith, sma' heart had he to sing.'

"We have had a brilliant theatre here, this season," the Poet writes to Mrs. Dunlop; "only, as all other business does, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country, *want of cash*. I mention our theatre merely to lug in an Occasional Address which I wrote for the benefit night of one of the actresses."]

Woulds't thou be cur'd, thy silly, moping elf
Laugh at her follies—laugh e'en at thyself:
Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
And as we're merry, may we still be wise!

On seeing Miss Fontenelle,

IN A FAVOURITE CHARACTER.

SWEET naïveté of feature,
Simple, wild, enchanting elf,
Not to thee, but thanks to Nature,
Thou art acting but thyself.

Wert thou awkward, stiff, affected,
Spurning nature, torturing art;
Loves and graces all rejected,
Then indeed thou'd'st act a part.

R. B.

To Chloris.*

'TIS Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since, thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lower;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower.)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store—
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious honour's part;
And, dearest gift of heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every muse to rove:
And doubly were the poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

* [These lines were written on the blank leaf of a copy of his poems, and presented to Chloris; she retained the book long, and prized it much: nor was she insensible of the light which the muse shed around her. That she did not seem so lovely in the sight of others as in the eyes of Burns is well known; but the Poet looked not at bloom alone; he had something of the taste of an artist: he admired the elegance of her form, the harmony of her movements as she danced, and the sweetness of her voice. The lady in question was Miss Jean Lorimer, of Craigieburn-Wood, near Moffat. Her history was unfortunate—she married an officer of the name of Whelpdale, but in consequence of his misconduct, she lived with him only a few months. After her separation, she resided at Dumfries, where the Poet often met her, and she seems to have inspired him with admiration and esteem. He has touchingly adverted to her misfortunes in the above charming verses.]

Poetical Inscription,

FOR AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE.

THOU of an independent mind,
With soul resolv'd, with soul resign'd;
Prepar'd Power's proudest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be, nor have, a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
Approach this shrine, and worship here.†

† [These lines were inscribed on an altar erected at the seat of Heron of Kerroughtree, in Galloway. It was the fashion of those feverish times to raise altars to Freedom, and plant trees to Liberty. Burns wrote the inscription during the summer of 1795; Heron was about to engage in an election contest, and these noble verses of the Poet served as an advertisement of the candidate's sentiments concerning freedom — a subject which was then fiercely agitating the country.]

The Heron Ballads.

[BALLAD I.]

I.

WHOM will you send to London town,
To Parliament and a' that?
Or wha in a' the country round
The best deserves to fa' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Thro' Galloway and a' that;
Where is the laird or belted knight
That best deserves to fa' that?

II.

Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yett,
And wha is't never saw that?
Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree met
And has a doubt of a' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that;
The independent patriot,
The honest man, an' a' that.

III.

Tho' wit and worth in either sex,
St. Mary's Isle can shaw that;
Wi' dukes an' lords let Selkirk mix,
And weel does Selkirk fa' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent commoner
Shall be the man for a' that.

IV.

But why should we to nobles jouk?
And it's against the law that;
For why, a lord may be a gouk
Wi' ribbon, star, and a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A lord may be a lousy loun,
Wi' ribbon, star, an' a' that.

v.

A beardless boy comes o'er the hills,
Wi' uncle's purse an' a' that;
But we'll hae ane frae 'mang oursels,
A man we ken, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
For we're not to be bought an' sold
Like naigs, an' nowt, an' a' that.

VI.

Then let us drink the Stewartry,
Kerroughtree's laird, an' a' that,
Our representative to be,
For weel he's worthy a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A House of Commons such as he,
They would be blest that saw that.*

The Heron Ballads.

[BALLAD II.]

THE ELECTION.

Tune.—*Fy, let us a' to the Bridal.*

I.

Fy, let us a' to Kirkcudbright,
For there will be bickerin' there;
For Murray's light-horse are to muster,
An' O, how the heroes will swear!
An' there will be Murray commander,
An' Gordon the battle to win;
Like brothers they'll stand by each other,
Sae knit in alliance an' kin.

II.

An' there will be black-nebbit Johnnie,†
The tongue o' the trump to them a';
An' he get na hell for his haddin'
The deil gets na justice ava';
An' there will be Kempleton's birkie,
A boy na sae black at the bane,
But, as for his fine nabob fortune,
We'll e'en let the subject alane. ‡

III.

An' there will be Wigton's new sheriff,
Dame Justice fu' brawlie has sped,
She's gotten the heart of a Busby,
But, Lord, what's become o' the head?
An' there will be Cardoness,§ Esquire,
Sae mighty in Cardoness' eyes;
A wight that will weather damnation—
The Devil the prey will despise.

IV.

An' there will be Douglasses || doughty,
New christ'ning towns far and near;
Abjuring their democrat doings,
By kissing the — o' a peer;
An' there will be Kenmure sae gen'rous!
Whose honour is proof to the storm,
To save them from stark reprobation,
He lent them his name to the firm.

V.

But we winna mention Redcastle,
The body, e'en let him escape!
He'd venture the gallows for siller,
An' 'twere na the cost o' the rape.
An' where is our King's lord lieutenant,
Sae fam'd for his gratefu' return?
The billie is gettin' his questions,
To say in St. Stephen's the morn.

VI.

An' there will be lads o' the gospel,
Muirhead, wha's as gude as he's true;
An' there will be Buittle's apostle,
Wha's mair o' the black than the blue;
An' there will be folk frae St. Mary's,
A house 'o great merit and note,
The deil ane but honours them highly,—
The deil ane will gie them his vote!

VII.

An' there will be wealthy young Richard,
Dame Fortune should hing by the neck;
For prodigal, thriftless, bestowing,
His merit had won him respect:
An' there will be rich brother nabobs,
Tho' nabobs, yet men of the first,
An' there will be Collieston's whiskers,
An' Quentin, o' lads not the warst.

VIII.

An' there will be stamp-office Johnnie,¶
Tak' tent how ye purchase a dram;
An' there will be gay Cassencarrie,
An' there will be gleg Colonel Tam;
An' there will be trusty Kerroughtree,
Whase honour was ever his law,
If the virtues were pack'd in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'.

IX.

An' can we forget the auld Major,
Wha'll ne'er be forgot in the Greys,
Our flatt'ry we'll keep for some ither,
Him only it's justice to praise.

* [This is the first of several ballads which Burns wrote to serve Patrick Heron of Kerroughtree, in two elections, in which he was opposed, first by Gordon of Balmaghie, and secondly by the Hon. Montgomery Stewart. They are known to the peasantry by the name of the "Heron Ballads." The poet seems at first to have contemplated some such harmless and laughable effusions as those which he wrote on Miller's election. The first ballad is gentle and moderate: it is a song of eulogy on Heron—not of reproof to his opposers. These ballads were printed at the time on one side of a sheet, and widely disseminated over the country: they were understood merely as election squibs, and none of the gentlemen lampooned looked otherwise upon them than as productions of poetic art. In this spirit they are included now in the Poet's works.]

† John Busby, of Tinwald Downs.

‡ Allusion is here made to a brother of Mr. Busby, whose East Indian fortune was popularly represented as having originated in some transactions connected with the Ayr Bank, before its owner went abroad.

§ Maxwell, of Cardoness.

|| Mr. Douglas of Corlingwark gave the name of Castle Douglas to a village which rose in his neighbourhood—now a populous town.

¶ John Syme, the poet's friend.

An' there will be maiden Kilkerran,
And also Barskimming's guid knight,
An' there will be roarin' Birtwhistle,
Wha, luckily, roars in the right.

X.

An' there, frae the Niddesdale border,
Will mingle the Maxwells in droves;
Teugh Johnnie, staunch Geordie, an' Walie
That griens for the fishes an' loaves;
An' there will be Logan Mac Douall,
Sculdudd'ry an' he will be there,
An' also the wild Scot o' Galloway,
Sodgerin,' gunpowder Blair.

XI.

Then hey the chaste int'rest o' Broughton,
An' hey for the blessings 'twill bring!
It may send Balmaghie to the Commons,
In Sodom 'twould make him a king;
An' hey for the sanctified Murray,
Our land wha wi' chapels has stor'd;
He founder'd his horse amang harlots,
But gied the auld naig to the Lord.*

The Heron Ballads.

[BALLAD III.]

AN EXCELLENT NEW SONG.

Tune.—*Buy broom Besoms.*

WHA will buy my troggin,†
Fine election ware;
Broken trade o' Broughton,
A' in high repair.
Buy braw troggin,
Frae the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.

There's a noble Earl's
Fame and high renown,‡
For an auld sang—
It's thought the gudes were stown.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the worth o' Broughton§
In a needle's ee;
Here's a reputation
Tint by Balmaghie.‖
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's an honest conscience
Might a prince adorn;
Frae the downs o' Tinwald—
Sae was never born.¶
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the stuff and lining,
O' Cardoness's head;
Fine for a sodger
A' the wale o' lead.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's a little wadset
Buittle's scrap o' truth,
Pawn'd in a gin-shop
Quenching holy drouth.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's armorial bearings
Frae the manse o' Urr;
The crest, and auld crab-apple**
Rotten at the core.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here is Satan's picture,
Like a bizzard gled,
Pouncing poor Redcastle
Sprawlin' like a taed.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the worth and wisdom
Collieston can boast;
By a thievish midge
They had been nearly lost.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here is Murray's fragments
O' the ten commands;
Gifted by black Jock
To get them aff his hands.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin?
If to buy ye're slack,
Hornie's turnin' chapman,—
He'll buy a' the pack.
Buy braw troggin
Frae the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.††

* [When Burns wrote this second ballad, the election had taken a serious turn against Heron. The verses are severe in most instances. Worthier men than several of those lampooned were not then alive, but he desired to help his friend, and regarded not what weapons he used, provided they were sharp. The gentlemen named were the most active canvassers on both sides; praise is lavished on the adherents of Heron, and satiric abuse is bestowed on the friends of the Gordon.]

† A set of miscellaneous dealers, who used to travel in Scotland, were called troggers. *Troggin* is a general phrase for their wares.

‡ The Earl of Galloway.

§ Mr. Murray, of Broughton.

‖ Gordon of Balmaghie, one of the candidates.

¶ A bitter allusion to Mr. Busby.

** Burns here alludes to a brother wit, the Rev. Dr. Muirhead, minister of Urr, in Galloway. The hit applied very well, for Muirhead was a wind-dried, unhealthy looking little manikin, very proud of his genealogy, and ambitious of being acknowledged on all occasions as the chief of *the Muirheads!*

†† [This third ballad refers to the contest between Heron and Stewart: the former was successful on the hustings, but was unseated by a Committee of the Commons, and died on his way back to Scotland. But his nature was too noble, and his mind too pious, to allow political disappointment to prevail against reason; his health had been for some time giving way: he was taken ill at Grantham, and died in peace with all mankind. It was one of the dreams of his day, in which Burns indulged, that, by some miraculous movement, the Tory counsellors of the king would be dismissed, and the Whigs, with the Prince of Wales at their head, rule and reign in their stead. That Heron aided in strengthening this "devout imagination" is certain; but then the laird of Kerroughtree was the victim of the delusion himself.]

The Heron Ballads.

[BALLAD IV..]

JOHN BUSBY'S* LAMENTATION.

'Twas in the seventeen hundred year
O' Christ, and ninety-five,
That year I was the waest man
O' ony man alive.

In March, the three-and-twentieth day,
The sun raise clear and bright;
But O, I was a waefu' man
Ere toofa' o' the night.

Yerl Galloway lang did rule this land
Wi' equal right and fame,
And thereto was his kinsman join'd
The Murray's noble name!

Yerl Galloway lang did rule the land
Made me the judge o' strife;
But now yerl Galloway's sceptre's broke,
And eke my hangman's knife.

'Twas by the banks o' bonny Dee,
Beside Kirkcudbright towers,
The Stewart and the Murray there
Did muster a' their powers.

The Murray on the auld grey yaud,
Wi' winged spurs did ride,
That auld grey yaud, yea, Nid'sdale rade,
He staw upon Nidside.

An' there had been the yerl himsel',
O there had been nae play;
But Garlies was to London gane,
And sae the kye might stray.

And there was Balmaghie, I ween,
In the front rank he wad shine;
But Balmaghie had better been
Drinking Madeira wine.

Frae the Glenken came to our aid
A chief o' doughty deed,
In case that worth should wanted be,
O' Kenmore we had need.

And there sae grave Squire Cardoness
Look'd on till a' was done;
Sae, in the tower o' Cardoness,
A howlet sits at noon.

And there led I the Busbys a';
My gamesome Billy Will,
And my son Maitland, wise as brave,
My footsteps followed still.

The Douglas and the Herons' name,
We set nought to their score:
The Douglas and the Herons' name
Had felt our weight before.

But Douglasses o' weight had we,
A pair o' trusty lairds,
For building cot-houses sae fam'd,
And christening kail-yards.

And by our banners march'd Muirhead,
And Buittle was na slack;
Whose haly priesthood nane can stain,
For wha can dye the black?

POEM,

Addressed to Mr. Mitchell,

COLLECTOR OF EXCISE,

DUMFRIES, 1796.

Friend of the Poet, tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake! alake! the meikle deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin'! jig and reel,
In my poor pouches!

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That one pound one, I sairly want it;
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood daunted,
I'd bear't in mind.

So may the auld year gang out moaning
To see the new come, laden, groaning
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin'
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowning
The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket;
Grim loun! he gat me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
And by that life, I'm promis'd mair o't,†
My hael and weel I'll tak a care o't,
A tentier way:
Then fareweel folly, hide and hair o't
For ance and aye!‡

* John Busby, Esq. of Tinwald-downs.

† [The Poet's hopes, alas! were not realized. He died a few months after these lines were written.]

‡ [In this modest and affecting way Burns reminded his superior officer that he was a poor man, suffering from ill health, and that his salary, then due, would be very acceptable. Collector Mitchell was a kind and generous man, and befriended the Poet on many occasions; but he was not aware, at this time, that

"Hungry ruin had him in the wind,"

or that his family were enduring privations such as preyed with double force on the sensitive and feeling heart of Burns.]

POETICAL INVITATION

TO

Mr. John Kennedy.

Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline Corse,*
Lord, man, there's lasses there wad force
A hermit's fancy;
And down the gate, in faith, they're worse,
And mair unchancy.

But, as I'm sayin', please step to Dow's,
And taste sic gear as Johnnie brews,
Till some bit callan bring me news
That you are there;
And if we dinna haud a bouze
I'se ne'er drink mair.

It's no I like to sit and swallow,
Then like a swine to puke and wallow;
But gie me just a true good fallow,
Wi' right ingine,
And spunkie ance to make us mellow,
And then we'll shine.

Now, if ye're ane o' warld's folk,
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
And sklent on poverty their joke
Wi' bitter sneer,
Wi' you no friendship will I troke,
Nor cheap nor dear.

But if, as I'm informed weel,
Ye hate, as ill's the vera deil,
The flinty heart that canna feel—
Come, Sir, here's tae you!
Hae, there's my haun', I wiss you weel,
And guid be wi' you.

The above epistle was accompanied by the following letter:—

Mossgiel, March 3rd, 1786.

Sir,—I have done myself the pleasure of complying with your request in sending you my Cottager. If you have a leisure minute, I should be glad if you would copy it, and return me either the original or the transcript, as I have not a copy of it by me, and I have a friend who wishes to see it.—R. B.

[John Kennedy then resided at Dumfries House: he interested himself greatly in the success of the Kilmarnock edition of the poems of Burns. The original manuscript of the Cotter's Saturday Night, inclosed in the letter, came into the possession of Mr. Cochrane, the publisher, with other precious reliques of the immortal Bard. They were subsequently presented by him to Allan Cunningham, who was then editing a complete edition of the Poet's works. They had previously been submitted to Sir Walter Scott, who set a very high value upon them.]

To Mrs. C——,

ON RECEIVING A WORK OF
HANNAH MORE.

Thou flattering mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind
The dear, the beauteous donor!
Though sweetly female every part,
Yet such a head, and more the heart,
Does both the sexes honour.
She show'd her taste refin'd and just
When she selected thee,
Yet deviating, own I must,
For so approving me.
But kind still, I mind still
The giver in the gift,
I'll bless her, and wiss her
A Friend above the Lift.

[Burns sent a copy of these lines to Mr. Aiken, in April, 1786.]

To Miss Jessy Lewars,†

DUMFRIES,

WITH A PRESENT OF BOOKS.

Thine be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the Poet's prayer;—
That fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindliest, best presage
Of future bliss, enrol thy name;
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution still aware
Of ill—but chief, man's felon snare.
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind—
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prays thy faithful friend, The Bard.

POEM ON LIFE,

ADDRESSED

To Colonel De Peyster,‡

DUMFRIES, 1796.

My honour'd Colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal:

---

* The market-cross.

† [Miss Jessy Lewars watched over the poet and his little household during his declining days, with all the affectionate reverence of a daughter. For this she has received the silent thanks of all who admire the genius of Burns, or look with sorrow on his setting sun; she has received more —the undying thanks of the Poet himself; his songs to her honour, and his simple gifts of books and verse, will keep her name and fame long in the world.]

‡ [Arentz de Peyster, Colonel of the Gentleman Volunteers of Dumfries, was a rigid disciplinarian: he had distinguished himself in the colonial war in America, and

Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus, pill,
And potion glasses.

O what a canty warld were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;
And fortune favour worth and merit
As they deserve,
(And aye a rowth, roast beef and claret;
Syne, wha wad starve?)

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and fripp'ry deck her;
Oh! flick'ring, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Aye wav'ring like the willow-wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches, like baudrons by a rattan,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on—
He's aff like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick! it is na fair,
First shewing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put as daft;
Syne weave, unseen, the spider snare
O' hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the flie aft bizzes bye,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure!

Soon, heels-o'er-gowdie! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy girning laugh enjoys his pangs
And murd'ring wrestle,
As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen:
The Lord preserve us frae the devil!
Amen! Amen!

To a Kiss.

Humid seal of soft affections,
Tend'rest pledge of future bliss,
Dearest tie of young connections,
Love's first snow-drop, virgin kiss.

Speaking silence, dumb confession,
Passion's birth, and infants' play,
Dove-like fondness, chaste concession,
Glowing dawn of brighter day.

Sorrowing joy, adieu's last action,
When ling'ring lips no more must join;
What words can ever speak affection
So thrilling and sincere as thine!*

EPIGRAMS, EPITAPHS, &c.

[The epigrams of Burns are numerous: they are sharp and personal, and partake of the character of the natural, rather than the artificial, man. He differs from other wits of his time; and, because he does so, his invective has been pronounced harsh and acrimonious, and his sarcasms coarse and savage. He is not indeed one of those who

"Hint a fault and hesitate dislike."

He grapples at once with his enemy, and prostrates him, not so much by science as by robust strength.]

I.

On the Author's Father,†

O ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains, ‡
Draw near with pious rev'rence, and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father and the gen'rous friend.

defended Detroit against the united efforts of the Indians and Republicans. He was regarded by many as a person harsh and stern; but this belonged rather to his manners than to his heart. He was in every respect a soldier. He thought the science of war the noblest of all sciences; a parade day the most glorious of all days, save that of victory. His voice was rough and commanding; his eye brightened up whenever he looked along the glittering ranks which he ruled; he forgot that he was eighty years old, and

"Bold, soldier-featured, undismayed,
He strode along."

This good old soldier befriended the Poet as far as the Poet would permit; for Burns was not without friends in his last moments.]

* [This exquisite little gem, of which Burns's authorship cannot be doubted, first appeared in a periodical paper published at Liverpool under the title of *Kaleidoscope*.]

† [William Burness merited the eulogy of his eminent son: early suffering made him somewhat austere, and a consciousness of declining strength and sinking fortunes hindered him from mixing much in the world's mirth; but he set his children an example of piety, patience and fortitude, and deserves to be named whenever humble worth is recorded.]

‡ Var. Who sympathise with virtue's pains.—MS.

The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
"For ev'n his failings lean'd to virtue's side."*

II.

On Tam the Chapman. †

As Tam the Chapman on a day
Wi' Death forgather'd by the way,
Weel pleas'd, he greets a wight sae famous,
And Death was nae less pleas'd wi' Thomas,
Wha cheerfully lays down the pack,
And there blaws up a hearty crack;
His social, friendly, honest heart
Sae tickled Death they could na part:
Sae, after viewing knives and garters,
Death takes him hame to gie him quarters.

III.

On Robert Aiken, Esq. ‡

KNOW thou, O stranger to the fame
Of this much lov'd, much honour'd name!
(For none that knew him need be told)
A warmer heart death ne'er made cold.

IV.

A Farewell. §

FAREWELL, *dear friend!* may guid luck hit
And, 'mang her favourites admit you! [you,
If e'er Detraction shone to smit you,
May nane believe him!
And ony De'il that thinks to get you,
Good Lord deceive him.

V.

On a Friend. ‖

AN honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest!
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth;
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

VI.

On Gavin Hamilton.

THE poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blam'd:
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be sav'd or damn'd! **

VII.

On Burns's Horse being impounded. ††

WAS e'er puir Poet sae befitted,
The maister drunk,—the horse committed:
Puir harmless beast! tak' thee nae care,
Thou'lt be a horse when he's nae mair *(mayor.)*

VIII.

On Wee Johnny. ‡‡

HIC JACET WEE JOHNNY.

WHOE'ER thou art, O reader know
That death has murder'd Johnny!
An' here his body lies fu' low—
For saul he ne'er had ony.

---

* Goldsmith.

† [The above lines were published by the late Mr. Cobbett, with the following particulars:—"It is our fortune to know a Mr. Kennedy, an aged gentleman, a native of Scotland, and the early associate and friend of Robert Burns. Both were born in Ayr-shire, near the town of Ayr, so frequently celebrated in the poems of the bard. Burns, in the 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' gives a noble picture of what we may presume to be the family circle of his father. Kennedy, whose boyhood was passed in the labours of a farm, subsequently became the agent to a mercantile house in a neighbouring town. Hence he is called in the epitaph which the Poet wrote on him, "Tam the Chapman." These lines were composed on Kennedy's recovery from a severe illness. On his way to kirk, on a bright Sabbath morning, he was met by the Poet, who, having rallied him on the sombre expression of his countenance, fell back, but soon overtook him, and presented him with the epitaph written on a bit of paper with a pencil.]

‡ [The gentleman to whom the "Cotter's Saturday Night" is addressed—one of the Poet's earliest patrons. He was so anxious to make his friend's merits known that, wherever he went, he recited his witty or serious poems, with so much taste and effect, that Burns said "I was unknown, Sir, till you read me into reputation."]

§ [These lines form the conclusion of a letter from Burns to Mr. John Kennedy, dated Kilmarnock, August, 1786, in which he alluded to his intention to go to Jamaica. See the correspondence of that period.]

‖ [This is one of those which Johnson calls an epithet to let. The name of the individual is neither mentioned in it nor alluded to in any of the author's productions. This is the more to be regretted for Burns seldom praised without reason.—"To no man," he observed in a note to John M'Murdo, "whatever his station in life, or his power to serve me, have I ever paid a compliment at the expense of truth."]

** ["These lines allude to the persecution which Gavin Hamilton endured for riding on Sunday, and speaking irreverently in the presence of a clergyman. The church should be merciful in all frivolous matters; disputes about trifles tend to pull dignity down. The day is past for a minister being expelled from his kirk for writing a virtuous drama, or a hearer being rebuked for galloping on Sunday."—CUNNINGHAM.]

†† [The Poet on one occasion paid the "merry city" of Carlisle a visit, and got "unco happy" within its ancient walls. He had come into the city on horseback, and his nag was turned out to grass for a few hours. The horse, as may well be supposed, having such a master, was a brute of taste; he, accordingly, took it into his head that the grass in a field belonging to the worthy corporation, which adjoined that in which it had been put, was of a better and sweeter flavour than its own allotment, and made good a lodgment there. The mayor impounded the horse, and the next morning, when Burns heard of the disaster, he wrote the above Stanza. The mayoralty of this worthy was about to expire on the very day on which the verse was written. As soon as he learned whose horse he had impounded, he gave instant orders for its liberation, exclaiming, 'Let him have it, by all means, or the circumstance will be heard of for ages to come.']

‡‡ ["Wee Johnny" was John Wilson, printer of the Kilmarnock edition of the Poet's works. He was so unconscious of the worth of what he was working upon, that he doubted the success of the speculation, upon which Burns said he was

IX.

Epigram on Bacon.*

At Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer,
And plenty of Bacon, each day in the year;
We've all things that's neat, and mostly in season:
But why always BACON?—come, give me a reason?

X.

On John Dove,

INNKEEPER, MAUCHLINE.†

HERE lies Johnny Pidgeon;
What was his religion?
Wha e'er desires to ken,
To some other warl'
Maun follow the carl,
For here Johnny Pidgeon had nane!

Strong ale was ablution—
Small beer, persecution,
A dram was *memento mori;*
But a full flowing bowl
Was the saving his soul,
And port was celestial glory.

XI.

On a Wag in Mauchline.*

LAMENT him, Mauchline husbands a',
He often did assist ye;
For had ye staid whole years awa,
Your wives they ne'er had missed ye.
Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye pass
To school in bands thegither,
O tread ye lighty on his grass,—
Perhaps he was your father.

XII.

On a Celebrated Ruling Elder. §

HERE souter Hood in death does sleep;—
To h—ll, if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep,
He'll haud it weel thegither.

XIII.

On a Noisy Polemic. ‖

BELOW thir stanes lie Jamie's banes:
O Death, it's my opinion,
Thou ne'er took such a bleth'rin' b—h
Into thy dark dominion!

---

a "silly saulless body," and wrote this sarcastic epitaph, which he printed without being aware that it was his own forlorn *hic jacet*. He had his revenge,—when Burns proposed a second edition, Wee Johnny demurred, unless some "good man" would guarantee payment. Mr. William Parker, of Kilmarnock, offered to do this at once. "It is like you to offer," said the Poet, "and like me to refuse."

* ["Mr. Ladyman, an English commercial traveller, alighting one afternoon, in the year 1794, at Brownhill, a stage about thirteen miles from Dumfries, was informed by the landlord that Burns, the Poet, was in the house, and that he had now the best possible opportunity of being introduced to the company of the cleverest man in Scotland. Mr. Ladyman immediately requested the honour of an introduction, and was forthwith shown into the room in which the Bard was sitting with two other gentlemen. The landlord, who was a forward sort of man, and stood upon no ceremony with Burns, presented Mr. Ladyman; and while the Poet rose and received the stranger with that courtesy which always marked his conduct, sat down himself along with his guests, and mixed in the conversation.

When Mr. Ladyman entered the inn, it was about two o'clock. The Poet had been drinking since mid-day with the two gentlemen, and was slightly elevated with liquor, but not to such a degree as to make any particular alteration upon his voice or manner. He did not speak much, nor take any eager share in the conversation. He frequently leant down his head upon the edge of the table, and was silent for a considerable time, as if he had been suffering bodily pain. However, when opportunity occurred, he would start up, and say something shrewd or decisive upon the subject in agitation.

About an hour after Mr. Ladyman arrived dinner was served, consisting of beans and bacon, &c., of which the landlord partook, like the rest of the company, evidently to the displeasure of the poet. During the course of the subsequent toddy, Mr. Ladyman ventured to request of Burns to let the company have a small specimen of his poetry upon any subject he liked to think of—"just *any thing*, in short—whatever might come uppermost—doggerel or not." Burns was never offended by any solicitation of this sort, when it was made in a polite manner, and with proper deference to his own good pleasure. In the present case, he granted the request so readily that, almost immediately after Mr. Ladyman had done speaking, he deliberately uttered the above lines. It must be understood that Bacon was the name of the landlord, whose habit of intruding into all companies was thus cleverly ridiculed. As far as Mr. Ladyman can recollect, Burns pronounced the lines without the least hesitation of voice, and apparently without finding any difficulty in embodying the thought in rhyme. No effort seemed necessary. He happened to have the glass in his hand at the time the request was made, and so trifling was the exertion of intellect apparently required that he did not put it down upon the table, but waited till he concluded the epigram, and then drank off his liquor amidst the roar of applause that ensued. The landlord had retired some little time before, otherwise Burns would not perhaps have chosen him as the subject of his satire. There is no doubt, however, that he would see and hear enough of it afterwards; for Burns, at the earnest entreaties of the company, immediately committed it to the breath of Fame, by writing it upon one of the panes in the window behind his chair."—CHAMBERS.]

† [This person kept the Whitefoord Arms, at the entrance of the Cowgate in Mauchline. The honest landlord's religion is made out to be a comparative appreciation of his various liquors.]

‡ [This laborious wag was James Smith, whose history has been related in the note to that exquisite epistle beginning "Dear Smith, the sleest pawkie thief!" He failed in all his speculations in Scotland, afterwards emigrated and died in the West Indies.]

§ [This ruling elder was one of those who examined anxiously into the poetical delinquencies of Burns, and hoped to find that the spiritual artillery of the kirk could be levelled at profane rhymers. He got hold, it is said, of some indecorous verses, which, in a mirthful moment, had dropt from the pen of the Poet, and as he read them in the Session, he paused at every verse, exclaiming "A wild lad! a wild lad!"]

‖ [This person's name is James Humphrey: he is by trade a mason, is now grown old and infirm, but loves to talk of Burns and of the warm debates between them on Effectual Calling and Free Grace. Cromek said that he found him at work in a quarry, with a fox-skin cap and wooden clogs on, and stirred him up to talk on devotional matters, which he did with a natural eloquence and a quick acuteness that surprised him.]

XIV.

On a Noted Coxcomb.

LIGHT lay the earth on Billy's breast,
His chicken heart so tender;
But build a castle on his head,
His skull will prop it under.

[The above is printed from the original MS. in the Poet's hand-writing.]

XV.

On Miss Jean Scott, of Ecclefechan.*

OH! had each Scot of ancient times
Been, Jeanny Scott, as thou art,
The bravest heart on English ground,
Had yielded like a coward!

XVI.

ON A

Hen-peck'd Country Squire.

As father Adam first was fool'd,
A case that's still too common,
Here lies a man a woman rul'd—
The devil rul'd the woman.

[The Poet was not satisfied with these lines—in a second attempt he varied the satire.]

XVII.

On the Same.

O DEATH, had'st thou but spar'd his life
Whom we, this day, lament!
We freely wad exchang'd the wife,
An' a' been weel content!

E'en as he is, cauld in his graff,
The swap we yet will do't;
Tak' thou the carlin's carcase aff,
Thou'se get the saul to boot.

[He was not, however, satisfied with his second epigram on this parsimonious dame; he turned the matter over in his mind, brought in a little learning, and sharpened the point of his satire.]

XVIII.

On the Same.

ONE Queen Artemisia, as old stories tell,
When depriv'd of her husband she loved so well,
In respect for the love and affection he'd shewn her,
She reduc'd him to dust and she drank up the powder.

But Queen Netherplace, of a diff'rent complexion,
When call'd on to order the fun'ral direction,
Would have ate her dead lord, on a slender pretence,
Not to show her respect, but—to save the ex-[pense!

[All that seems necessary to be said of this sordid lady has been told by the Poet. In the original MS. he has written "Campbell of Netherplace."]

XIX.

The Highland Welcome.

WHEN Death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come;
In Heaven itself I'll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.†

XX.

EXTEMPORE,

On William Smellie,

AUTHOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND MEMBER OF THE ANTIQUARIAN AND ROYAL SOCIETIES OF EDINBURGH.

SHREWD Willie Smellie to Crochallan came,‡
The old cock'd hat, the grey surtout, the same;
His bristling beard just rising in its might,
'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night;
His uncomb'd grizzly locks wild staring, thatch'd
A head for thought profound & clear unmatch'd:
Yet tho' his caustic wit was biting, rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

XXI.

Verses

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE INN AT CARRON.

WE cam' na here to view your warks
In hopes to be mair wise,
But only, lest we gang to hell,
It may be nae surprise:

* [The young lady, the subject of these complimentary lines, dwelt in Ayr, and cheered the Poet not only with her sweet looks, but with her sweet voice. Tradition relates no more. The name of Stuart is sometimes substituted for Scott, but with little propriety, for the point is lost by the change.]

† [Burns, on repassing the Highland border, in 1787, turned round and bade farewell to the hospitalities of the north in these happy lines. Another account states that he was called on for a toast at table, and gave "The Highland Welcome," much to the pleasure of all who heard him.]

‡ [He belonged to a club of which Burns was a member, called the Crochallan Fencibles, the members of which met in Douglas's tavern, in the Anchor Close, Edinburgh. The Club took its name from a beautiful plaintive Highland Air, entitled, *Cro Chalein*—literally Colin's Castle—an air which Douglas occasionally sang with much effect to his guests. Smellie was a singular person, disregarded nicety of dress, loved wine and sociality, and sallies of humour; yet possessed a warm and generous heart. The above lines also form a part of the Third Epistle to Robert Graham, Esq., of Fintray.]

But whan we tirl'd at your door,
Your porter dought na hear us;
Sae may, shou'd we to hell's yetts come,
Your billy Satan sair us! *

[The reason assigned for refusing to show the Carron Foundries to Burns was that he called on a Sunday. This could hardly be: he knew that the labour which rendered the place interesting had ceased; that the furnaces were mostly extinguished, and the "warks" not to be seen. He perhaps sought admittance without an introduction. On his second visit, he was received with a civility that soothed him: he made one remark—"The blazing furnaces and melting iron realized the description of the giants forging thunderbolts."]

XXII.

Lines on viewing Stirling Palace.

HERE Stuarts once in glory reign'd,
And laws for Scotland's weal ordain'd;
But now unroof'd their palace stands,
Their sceptre's sway'd by other hands;
The injur'd Stuart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills their throne—
An idiot race, to honour lost:
Who know them best, despise them most.†

XXIII.

The Reproof. ‡

RASH mortal, and slanderous Poet, thy name
Shall no longer appear in the records of fame;

---

* [Burns, it would appear, had gone to Carron on a Sunday, and given in an assumed name for permission to see the Works. The following lines, in answer to the Poet, were written by Mr. Benson, one of the clerks.

"If you came here to see our works,
You should have been more civil
Than to give a fictitious name,
In hopes to cheat the Devil.

Six days a week to you and all
We think it very well;
The other, if you go to church,
May keep you out of hell."]

† [When Burns visited Stirling in 1787, and beheld the ruins of that princely place where Scottish parliaments once assembled, and princes dispensed justice, he was stung to the heart, and, it has been stated, vented his indignation in these lines. The last couplet is now restored. The present lovely scion of the House of Brunswick can afford to smile at the spleen of a disappointed poet. He was not the only one who felt attachment to the House of Stuart.

"The original lines were certainly as strongly marked by an unworthy feeling towards the reigning, as by a generous affection towards the dethroned family; but the sin of writing them is unnecessarily aggravated by Mr. Lockhart, when he says, "The last couplet, alluding, in the coarsest style, to the melancholy state of the good king's health at the time, was indeed an outrage which no political prejudice could have made a gentleman approve." The king was not seized with his melancholy indisposition till the month of October in the ensuing year. In that couplet—here, by the way, printed for the first time—Burns seems to have merely proceeded upon a prevailing impression of at least the Jacobite part of the community, respecting the intellectual character of the family of Brunswick-Lunenburg. How far the impression was from the truth it would be ludicrous to advert to in serious terms; but it is curious now to perceive traces of the extent to which it animated a portion of British society in the past age. It appears that the impassioned peasant of Kyle was not, in the use of this rash and coarse expression, more guilty of lese-majesty than another individual, who, though under the same political prepossessions, was certainly the last whom Mr. Lockhart could have expected to be guilty of any such out-burst. In a letter written by Bishop Forbes, of the Scottish Episcopal Church at Leith, to Bishop Gordon, of London, and of which a copy, under Forbes's hand, rests before us, is the following passage:—'You know the famous Dr. Johnson has been among us. Several anecdotes could I give you of him; but one is most singular. Dining one day at the table of one of the Lords of Session, the company stumbled upon characters, particularly, it would appear, of kings. 'Well,' said the bluff doctor, 'George the First was a robber, George the Second a fool, and George the Third is an idiot!' How the company stared I leave you to judge. It was far from being polite, especially considering the table at which he was entertained, and that he himself is a pensioner at £300 a-year.' It is, indeed, just possible that no such saying was ever uttered, but much more likely that it was. If Burns's imprudence was great, it was soon repented of. Coming back to Stirling in a few weeks, and finding that the verses had given offence, he broke the pane on which they were inscribed."—THE LAND OF BURNS, a beautifully embellished work, edited by *Professor Wilson* and *Robert Chambers*.]

[A writer in the Paisley Magazine, December 1828, gives the following more satisfactory account of these celebrated lines, involving circumstances which reflect the brightest lustre on the character of the Ayr-shire Poet:—"They were not the composition of Burns, but of his friend Nicol. This we state from the testimony of those who themselves knew the fact as it truly stood, and who were well acquainted with the high-wrought feelings of honour and friendship which induced Burns to remain silent under the obloquy which their affiliation entailed upon him. The individual whose attention the lines first attracted was a clerk in the employ, ment of the Carron Iron Company, then travelling through the country collecting accounts, or receiving orders, who happened to arrive immediately after the departure of the poet and his friend. On inquiry, he learned that the last occupant of the apartment was the far-famed Burns, and on this discovery he immediately transferred a copy of the lines to his memorandum-book of orders, made every person as wise as himself on the subject, and penned an answer to them, which, with the lines themselves, soon spread over the country, and found a place in every periodical of the day. To this poetic critic of the Carron Works do we owe the first hint of Burns being the author of this tavern effusion. They who saw the writing on the glass know that it was not the hand-writing of the poet; but this critic, who knew neither his autograph nor his person, chose to consider it as such, and so announced it to the world. On his return to Stirling, Burns was both irritated and grieved to find that this idle and mischievous tale had been so widely spread and so generally believed. The reason of the cold and constrained reception he met with from some distinguished friends, which at the time he could not account for, was now explained, and he felt in all its bitterness the misery of being innocently blamed for a thing which he despised as unworthy of his head and heart. To disavow the authorship was to draw down popular indignation on the head of Nicol—a storm which would have annihilated him. Rather than ruin the interests of that friend, he generously and magnanimously, or, as some less fervent mind may think, foolishly, devoted himself to unmerited obloquy, by remaining silent, and suffering the story to circulate uncontradicted. The friend who was with Burns when he indignantly smashed the obnoxious pane with the butt end of his whip, and who was perfectly aware of the whole circumstances as they really stood, long and earnestly pleaded with him to contradict the story that had got wind, and injured him so much in public estimation. It was with a smile of peculiar melancholy that Burns made this noble and characteristic reply: 'I know I am not the author; but I'll be damned ere I betray him. It would ruin him—he is my friend!' It is unnecessary to add that to this resolution he ever after remained firm."]

‡ [The imprudence of the lines on Stirling Palace was hinted to the Poet by a friend; on which he took out his diamond, saying, "O, I mean to reprove myself," walked to the window, and scratched *The Reproof* on the pane.]

Dost not know, that old Mansfield, who writes like the Bible, [libel?
Says, The more 'tis a truth, Sir, the more 'tis a

XXIV.

Lines

WRITTEN UNDER THE PICTURE OF THE CELEBRATED MISS BURNS.*

CEASE, ye prudes, your envious railing,
Lovely Burns has charms—confess:
True it is, she had one failing—
Had a woman ever less?

XXV.

Johnny Peep.

HERE am I, Johnny Peep,
I saw three sheep,
And these three sheep saw me;
Half-a-crown a piece
Will pay for their fleece,
And so Johnny Peep gets free.†

XXVI.

The Henpeck'd Husband. ‡

CURS'D be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife!
Who has no will but by her high permission;
Who has not sixpence but in her possession;
Who must to her his dear friend's secret tell;
Who dreads a curtain-lecture worse than hell!
Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart;
I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
I'd kiss her maids, and kick the perverse b—.

XXVII.

On Incivility shewn him at Inverary.

WHOE'ER he be that sojourns here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he come to wait upon
The lord their god, his Grace.

There's naething here but Highland pride,
And Highland cauld and hunger;
If Providence has sent me here,
'Twas surely in his anger.§

XXVIII.

On Elphinstone's Translations OF MARTIAL'S EPIGRAMS ‖

O THOU, whom poesy abhors!
Whom prose has turned out of doors!
Heard'st thou that groan?—proceed no further
'Twas laurell'd Martial roaring Murther!

XXIX.

On a Schoolmaster.

HERE lie Willie Michie's banes;
O, Satan! when ye tak' him,
Gi'e him the schoolin' o' your weans,
For clever de'ils he'll mak' 'em!¶

XXX.

On Andrew Turner.

IN se'enteen hunder an' forty-nine
Satan took stuff to mak a swine,
And cuist it in a corner;
But wilily he chang'd his plan,
And shap'd it something like a man,
And ca'd it Andrew Turner.

---

* ["The Miss Burns of these lines was well known to the bucks of Edinburgh in the days of the Poet's abode in the metropolis. There is a letter still extant, addressed by Burns, in behalf of his beauteous namesake, to the magistrates of Edinburgh, in which she is made ironically to claim their protection for a laxer system of social morality, and a freer intercourse betwixt youth and beauty."—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [There is some character, if little poetry, in the above impromptu. Burns was one day at a cattle-market, held in a town in Cumberland, and, in the bustle that prevails on these occasions, he lost sight of some of the friends who accompanied him. He pushed to a tavern, opened the door of every room, and merely looked in, till at last he came to one in which three jolly Cumberland blades were enjoying themselves. As he withdrew his head, one of them shouted "Come in, Johnny Peep." Burns obeyed the call, seated himself at the table, and, in a short time, was the life and soul of the party. In the course of their merriment, it was proposed that each should write a stanza of poetry, and put it with half-a-crown below the candlestick, with this stipulation, that the best poet was to have his half-crown returned, while the other three were to be expended to treat the party. What the others wrote has now sunk into oblivion. The stanza of the Ayr-shire ploughman being read, a roar of laughter followed, and, while the palm of victory was unanimously voted to Burns, one of the Englishmen exclaimed, "In God's name, who are you?" An explanation ensued, and the happy party did not separate the same day they met.]

‡ ["It is related that one day the lady of a house where the Poet dined expressed herself with less civility than he expected about the depth of her husband's potations and his habits of extravagance. Her freedom of tongue was rewarded by these sharp verses."—CUNNINGHAM.]

§ [During the first Highland tour of the Poet, he halted at Inverary; but, on finding himself neglected by the innkeeper, whose house was filled with visiters to his Grace the Duke of Argyll, he expressed in these verses his sense of the incivility with which he was treated. Tradition speaks of a pursuit which took place on the part of "The Campbell," and of a determination not to be soothed on the part of the Poet.]

‖ [Burns has himself related the origin of this sally:—"Stopping at a merchant's shop in Edinburgh, a friend of mine, one day, put Elphinstone's Translation of Martial into my hand, and desired my opinion of it. I asked permission to write my opinion on a blank leaf of the book; which being granted, I wrote this epigram."]

¶ [Willie Michie was schoolmaster of Cleish parish, in Fife-shire, and became acquainted with Burns during his first visit to Edinburgh, in 1787. His name is not mentioned in all the correspondence of the Poet, nor is he numbered amongst his admirers or friends.]

XXXI.

A Grace before Dinner.*

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want!
We bless thee, God of Nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent:
And, if it please thee, Heav'nly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But, whether granted, or deny'd,
Lord, bless us with content!—
Amen.

XXXII.

On Mr. W. Cruikshanks.

Honest Will's to heaven gane,
And mony shall lament him,
His faults they a' in Latin lay,
In English nane e'er kent them.

XXXIII.

On Wat.

Sic a reptile was Wat,
Sic a miscreant slave,
That the very worms damn'd him
When laid in his grave.
"In his flesh there's a famine,"
A starv'd reptile cries;
"An' his heart is rank poison,"
Another replies.†

XXXIV.

On Captain Francis Grose.

The Devil got notice that Grose was a-dying,
So whip! at the summons, old Satan came flying;
But when he approach'd where poor Francis lay moaning,
And saw each bed-post with its burden a-groaning,
Astonish'd! confounded! cry'd Satan, "By G-d!
I'll want 'im, ere I take such a damnable load!"‡

XXXV.

On the Kirk of Lamington,

IN CLYDESDALE.

As cauld a wind as ever blew,
A caulder kirk, and in't but few;
As cauld a Minister's e'er spak,
Ye'se a' be het ere I come back. §

XXXVI.

Lines,

WRITTEN ON A PANE OF GLASS, IN THE INN AT MOFFATT.

Ask why God made the gem so small,
And why so huge the granite?
Because God meant mankind should set
The higher value on it. ‖

XXXVII.

Lines, spoken extempore,

ON BEING APPOINTED TO THE EXCISE.

Searching auld wives' barrels,
Och—hon! the day!
That clarty barm should stain my laurels;
But—what'll ye say?
These movin' things ca'd wives and weans
Wad move the very hearts o' stanes! ¶

XXXVIII.

Verses

ADDRESSED TO THE LANDLADY OF THE INN AT ROSSLYN.

My blessings on you, sonsy wife;
I ne'er was here before;
You've gi'en us walth for horn and knife,
Nae heart could wish for more.

---

* [It was a favourite practice to ask the Poet for a blessing, even where he was a guest. His readiness was generally known; and whatever he said was gratefully remembered.]

† [The name of the person on whom this terrible epitaph was composed is not known. Mr. Cromek used to recite it, and say that he had sought in vain to discover who the Walter was against whom it was directed. The name might be found; but, in gratifying idle curiosity, much pain would be inflicted.]

‡ [It is related that, one evening, at table, when wine and wit were flowing, Grose, delighted with some of the sallies of Burns, requested the honour of a couplet upon himself. The Poet eyed the corpulent antiquarian for a minute's space or so, and then repeated the above epigram amid roars of laughter.]

§ [The Poet was stopped by a storm once in Clydesdale, and on Sunday went to Lamington Kirk; the day was so rough, the kirk so cold, and the sermon so little to his liking, that he left his poetic protest in the pew where he had been sitting.]

‖ [One day, while Burns was at Moffat, "The charming lovely Davies" of one of his songs rode past, accompanied by a lady tall and portly. On a friend asking the Poet why God made one lady so large, and Miss Davies so little, he replied in the words of the epigram. No one has apologized so handsomely for "scrimpit stature."]

¶ [That the Poet delighted not in the name of gauger is well known; yet he would allow no one to speak ill of the Excise but himself. He was strict, but merciful; the smuggler had no chance of escape from him, while to the country purchaser he was very indulgent.]

Heav'n keep you free frae care and strife,
Till far ayont fourscore;
And, while I toddle on through life,
I'll ne'er gang by your door.

XXXIX.

On Grizzel Grim.

Here lies with death auld Grizzel Grim,
Lincluden's ugly witch;
O Death, how horrid is thy taste
To lie with such a b——!

XL.

Epitaph on W——.

Stop, Thief! dame Nature cried to Death,
As Willie drew his latest breath;
You have my choicest model ta'en,
How shall I make a fool again?

XLI.

On Mr. Burton.*

Here cursing, swearing Burton lies,
A buck, a beau, or *Dem my eyes!*
Who, in his life, did little good,
And his last words were *Dem my blood!*

XLII.

On Mrs. Kemble.†

Kemble, thou cur'st my unbelief
Of Moses and his rod;
At Yarico's sweet notes of grief
The rock with tears had flow'd.

XLIII.

Extempore, to Mr. Syme,

ON

REFUSING TO DINE WITH HIM.

December 17th, 1795.

No more of your guests, be they titled or not,
And cook'ry the first in the nation;
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit,
Is proof to all other temptation.‡

XLIV.

To Mr. Syme,

WITH A PRESENT OF A DOZEN OF PORTER.

O, had the malt thy strength of mind,
Or hops the flavour of thy wit,
'Twere drink for first of human-kind,
A gift that e'en for Syme were fit.§

Jerusalem Tavern, Dumfries.

XLV.

Inscription on a Goblet.

There's death in the cup—sae beware!
Nay, more—there is danger in touching;
But wha can avoid the fell snare?
The man and his wine's sae bewitching!‖

---

* [On one occasion Burns met at the festive board a dashing young Englishman of the name of Burton, who became very importunate that the poet should compose an epitaph for him. In vain the bard objected that he was not sufficiently acquainted with Burton's character and habits to qualify him for the task; the request was constantly repeated with a "*Dem my eyes*, Burns, do write an epitaph for me; Oh, *Dem my blood*, do, Burns, write an epitaph for me." Overcome by his importunity, Burns at last took out his pencil and produced the above. It operated like a shower-bath upon poor Burton, but electrified the rest of the company.]

† [When Mrs. Kemble performed, in 1794, the part of Yarico at the Dumfries theatre, Burns was in Mrs. Riddel's box, and was deeply moved by her natural and pathetic acting. He took out a bit of paper, wrote these lines with a pencil, and had them handed to her at the conclusion of the piece.]

‡ [John Syme, of Ryedale, was the constant companion of Burns, and these lines were spoken to him in answer to an invitation to dine, in which he promised the "first of company and the first of cookery." He was a gentleman of education and talent, difficult to please in the pleasures of the table; a wit in his way, an epigramatist and rhymer, an admirable teller of a story, and altogether a convivial and well-informed man.

"The acquaintance which Burns maintained with a considerable number of the gentry of his neighbourhood was not favourable to him. They frequently sent him game from their estates, and disdained not to come to his house to partake of it. The large quantities of rum which flowed into his stores gratuitously, in consequence of seizures, as was then the custom, were also injurious. Yet, as far as circumstances left him to his own inclinations, he was a man of simple, as well as kindly, domestic habits. As he was often detained by company from the dinner provided for him by his wife, she sometimes, on a conjecture of his probable absence, would not prepare that meal for him. When he chanced to come home, and find no dinner ready, he was never in the least troubled or irritated, but would address himself with the greatest cheerfulness to any succedaneum that could be readily set before him. They generally had abundance of good Dunlop cheese, sent to them by their Ayr-shire friends. The poet would sit down to that wholesome fare, with bread and butter, and his book by his side, and seem, to any casual visiter, such as Miss Lewars, as happy as a courtier at the feasts of kings."—Chambers.]

§ [Burns had a happy knack of paying compliments; and Syme abounded in humour, and in dry sarcastic sallies, such as the Poet loved. Ramsay of Ochtertyre said the pathos of Burns's conversation brought tears even to the cheeks of Mr. Syme, "albeit unused to the melting mood."]

‖ [One day after dinner at Ryedale, Burns wrote these lines on a goblet with his diamond. Syme would seem to have been less affected with the compliment than with defacing his crystal service, for he threw the goblet behind the fire. We are not told what the Poet thought; but it is said that Brown, the clerk of "Stamp-office Johnny," snatched the goblet out of the fire uninjured, and kept it as a relique till his death.]

XLVI.

Poetical Reply to an Invitation.

Mossgiel, 1786.

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,
And faith, I am gay and hearty!
To tell the truth an' shame the deil,
I am as fou as Bartie:*

But foorsday, sir, my promise leal,
Expect me o' your party,
If on a beastie I can speel,
Or hurl in a cartie.—R. B.

XLVII.

Another.

THE King's most humble servant I,
Can scarcely spare a minute;
But I'll be wi' you by and bye,
Or else the devil's in it.

[It was in such verses as these that the Poet answered invitations and replied to civilities: he was rarely at a loss, and had a happy knack of escaping from difficulties whenever he attempted to escape in rhyme.]

XLVIII.

A Mother's Address to her Infant.

MY blessin's upon thy sweet wee lippie:
My blessin's upon thy bonnie e'e brie!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou's aye the dearer, and dearer to me!

XLIX.

The Creed of Poverty.

IN politics if thou would'st mix,
And mean thy fortunes be;
Bear this in mind,—'Be deaf and blind;
Let great folks hear and see.'†

L.

Written in a Lady's Pocket-Book.

GRANT me, indulgent Heav'n, that I may live
To see the miscreants feel the pain they give;
Deal freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till slave and despot be but things which were.‡

LI.

The Parson's Looks.§

THAT there is falsehood in his looks
I must and will deny;
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.

LII.

Extempore,

PINNED TO A LADY'S COACH.

IF you rattle along like your mistress's tongue,
Your speed will outrival the dart; [the road,
But a fly for your load, you'll break down on
If your stuff be as rotten's her heart.

[The above is printed verbatim from the original MS. in Burns's hand-writing.]

LIII.

On Robert Riddel.

To Riddel, much-lamented man,
This ivied cot was dear;
Reader, dost value matchless worth?
This ivied cot revere.‖

LIV.

The Toast.

INSTEAD of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast—
Here's the memory of those on the twelfth that
we lost!— [we found;
That we lost, did I say? nay, by Heav'n, that
For their fame it shall last while the world goes
round.

---

* [How fou Bartie was we must leave the men of Kyle to tell: it seems a proverbial saying, and may be interpreted by a line of an old song—

"I'm no just fou, but I'm gayley yet."

The original MS. is preserved in the Paisley Library.]

† [When the Board of Excise informed Burns that his business was to act, and not to think, he read the order to a friend, turned the paper, and wrote what he called the "Creed of Poverty."]

‡ ["That Burns sympathised with the lovers of liberty in the first out-bursts of the French Revolution, these verses, as well as others, sufficiently testify. That freedom was darkening down into despotism in France he lived partly to see; nor was his muse silent in support of order and independence in his native land.—CUNNINGHAM.]

§ [Some one said to Burns that he saw falsehood in a certain Rev. Doctor B.'s very looks; the Poet considered for a moment, and gave his answer in this epigram.]

‖ [The first time that Burns rode up Nithside, after the death of his friend of Friar's Carse, he gave a boy his horse to hold, went into the hermitage in the wood, threw himself on a seat, and remained for a full half hour. These lines were traced on the window of the hermitage by the diamond of Burns.]

The next in succession, I'll give you—the King!
Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing! [tion,
And here's the grand fabric, our free Constitu-
As built on the base of the great Revolution;
And longer with politics not to be cramm'd,
Be Anarchy curs'd, and be Tyranny damn'd;
And who would to Liberty e'er prove disloyal,
May his son be a hangman, & he his first trial!*

LV.

ON A

Person nicknamed the Marquis.

Here lies a mock Marquis, whose titles were shamm'd;
If ever he rise, it will be to be damn'd.†

LVI.

On Excisemen.

LINES WRITTEN ON A WINDOW. IN DUMFRIES.

Ye men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
'Gainst poor excisemen? give the cause a hearing; [ledgers;
What are your landlord's rent-rolls? taxing
What premiers—what? even Monarch's mighty gaugers: [men?
Nay, what are priests, those seeming godly wise
What are they, pray, but Spiritual Excisemen?‡

LVII.

Lines written on a Pane of Glass,

ON THE OCCASION OF A NATIONAL THANKSGIVING FOR A NAVAL VICTORY.

Ye hypocrites! are these your pranks?
To murder men, and gie God thanks!
For shame! gie o'er, proceed no further—
God won't accept your thanks for murther!

LVIII.

Verses

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE GLOBE TAVERN, DUMFRIES.

The greybeard, old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures,
Give me with gay Folly to live; [sures,
I grant him calm-blooded, time-settled plea-
But Folly has raptures to give.§

LIX.

Invitation to a Medical Gentleman,

TO ATTEND A MASONIC ANNIVERSARY MEETING.

Friday first's the day appointed,
By our Right Worshipful anointed,
To hold our grand procession!
To get a blade o' Johnnie's morals,
And taste a swatch o' Manson's barrels,
I' the way of our profession.
Our Master and the Brotherhood
Wad a' be glad to see you;
For me I would be mair than proud
To share the mercies wi' you.
If death, then, wi' scaith, then,
Some mortal heart is hechtin,
Inform him, and storm‖ him,
That Saturday ye'll fecht him.

ROBERT BURNS.

LX.

I murder hate, by field or flood,
Tho' glory's name may screen us;
In wars at hame I'll spend my blood,
Life-giving wars of Venus.

The deities that I adore,
Are social peace and plenty;
I'm better pleas'd to make one more,
Than be the death o' twenty.

LXI.

My bottle is my holy pool,
That heals the wounds o' care an' dool;
And pleasure is a wanton trout,
An' ye drink it dry, ye'll find him out.

---

* [Burns was called upon for a song at a dinner of the Dumfries volunteers, in honour of Rodney's victory of the 12th of April, 1782, he replied to the call by reciting the above lines.]

† [This personage was landlord of a respectable public-house in Dumfries, which Burns frequented; in a place where two names abound, he obtained that of the Marquis; and the little court or alley where his change-house stood is still called "The Marquis's Close." In a moment when vanity prevailed against prudence, he desired Burns to write his epitaph. He did it at once—little to the pleasure of the landlord.]

‡ [The origin of these lines is curious and accidental. One day, while in the King's Arms Tavern, Dumfries, Burns overheard a country gentleman talking wittily rather than wisely concerning excisemen: the Poet went to a window, and on one of the panes wrote this Rebuke with his diamond. It was taken in good part, as indeed it could not well be otherwise, and remained long on the window an attraction to travellers.]

§ [The Poet ever looked widely abroad; he took no narrow-souled views of anything; he saw that even in the company of folly a wise man might sit down and be edified. "Out of the nettle danger he could pluck the flower safety." There was no hypocrisy or cant in his composition.]

‖ That is, threaten him.

LXII.

The Selkirk Grace.

Some hae meat, and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
And sae the Lord be thankit.*

LXIII.

Innocence.

Innocence
Looks gaily-smiling on; while rosy pleasure
Hides young desire amid her flowery wreath,
And pours her cup luxuriant: mantling high
The sparkling heavenly vintage, Love and Bliss!

[The above exquisite lines appear in Cromek's "Reliques of Burns," and also in the "Letters to Clarinda." The original is in the handwriting of the Poet.]

LXIV.

On the Poet's Daughter.

Here lies a rose, a budding rose,
Blasted before its bloom:
Whose innocence did sweets disclose
Beyond that flower's perfume.

To those who for her loss are griev'd,
This consolation's given—
She's from a world of woe reliev'd,
And blooms a rose in Heaven. †

LXV.

On Gabriel Richardson,

BREWER, DUMFRIES. ‡

Here brewer Gabriel's fire's extinct,
And empty all his barrels:
He's blest—if, as he brew'd, he drink—
In upright honest morals.

LXVI.

On the Death of a Lap-Dog,

NAMED ECHO.

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now half-extinct your powers of song,
Sweet Echo is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now half your din of tuneless sound
With Echo silent lies.§

LXVII.

On seeing the beautiful Seat of LORD GALLOWAY.

What dost thou in that mansion fair?—
Flit, Galloway, and find
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
The picture of thy mind!

LXVIII.

On the Same.

No Stewart art thou, Galloway,
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
Not one of them a knave.

LXIX.

On the Same.

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway,
Thro' many a far-fam'd sire!
So ran the far-fam'd Roman way,
So ended—in a mire!

LXX.

To the Same,

ON THE AUTHOR BEING THREATENED WITH HIS RESENTMENT.

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway,
In quiet let me live:
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.‖

LXXI.

On a Country Laird.

Bless the Redeemer, Cardoness,
With grateful lifted eyes,
Who said that not the soul alone,
But body too, must rise;

* [On a visit to St. Mary's Isle, the Earl of Selkirk requested Burns to say grace at dinner. These were the words he uttered—they were applauded then, and have since been known in Galloway by the name of "The Selkirk Grace."]

† [These tender and affecting lines were written on the death of the Poet's daughter, who died in the autumn of 1795. "The autumn," says he, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, "robbed me of my only daughter and darling child; and that at a distance too, and so rapidly as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her." He loved the child dearly, and mourned her loss with many tears. His own health was also giving way at this time.]

‡ [These lines were written on a goblet still preserved in the family. At Gabriel's hospitable table Burns spent many pleasant hours. His son, Dr. Richardson, the distinguished traveller, said the last mark of civilization which he found on his expedition to the north, was poetry—and that by Burns.]

§ [Burns wrote these lines at Kenmore Castle, an ancient seat of the Gordons. It happened that Mrs. Gordon's lap-dog died on the day of the Poet's arrival. She requested an epitaph for him. "This," says Syme, "was setting Hercules to his distaff; he disliked the subject, but to please the lady he would try."]

‖ [These sharp squibs were launched against the house of Galloway, during the Heron contest. Though "the Stewart" at first felt offended, he smiled, it is said, when he considered how wayward the muse is, and how hot even the calmest grows during an election.]

For had He said "The soul alone
From death I will deliver;"
Alas! alas! O Cardoness,
Then thou hadst slept for ever!*

LXXII.

On John Bushby.†

Here lies John Bushby, honest man!—
Cheat him, Devil, gin ye can.

LXXIII.

The True Loyal Natives.

Ye true "Loyal Natives" attend to my song,
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;
From envy and hatred your corps is exempt,
But where is your shield from the darts of contempt?

The origin of these lines is related by Cromek. When politics ran high the Poet happened to be in a tavern, and the following lines—the production of one of "The True Loyal Natives" were handed over the table to Burns:—

"Ye sons of sedition, give ear to my song,
Let Syme, Burns, and Maxwell, pervade every throng;
With Craken the attorney, and Mundell the quack,
Send Willie the monger to hell with a smack."

The Poet took out a pencil and instantly wrote the above reply.

LXXIV.

On a Suicide.‡

Earth'd up here lies an imp o' hell,
Planted by Satan's dibble—
Poor silly wretch, he's damn'd himsel'
To save the Lord the trouble.

LXXV.

Lines to John Rankine.

He who of Rankine sang, lies stiff and dead,
And a green grassy hillock haps his head;
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed!

[These lines were written by Burns, while on his death-bed, to John Rankine, and forwarded to Adamhill immediately after the Poet's death.]

LXXVI.

To Miss Jessy Lewars.

Talk not to me of savages
From Afric's burning sun,
No savage e'er could rend my heart
As, Jessy, thou hast done.

But Jessy's lovely hand in mine,
A mutual faith to plight,
Not even to view the heavenly choir
Would be so blest a sight. §

LXXVII.

The Toast.

Fill me with the rosy wine,
Call a toast—a toast divine;
Give the Poet's darling flame,
Lovely Jessy be the name;
Then thou mayest freely boast
Thou hast given a peerless toast. ‖

LXXVIII.

ON THE

Sickness of Miss Jessy Lewars.

Say, sages, what's the charm on earth
Can turn Death's dart aside?
It is not purity and worth,
Else Jessy had not died.¶—R. B.

* [The hero of these merciless verses was, it is said, a very worthy person, Sir David Maxwell, of Cardoness, who had offended the Poet in the heat of the Heron election. What the offence was has not been stated; but contradiction is enough in election matters, when the wisest men justify the sarcasm of the Frenchman, that the British go stark mad every seven years.]

† [He was a good lawyer, keen, acute, fertile in expedients, and full of resources in all pressing emergencies. The peasantry, who hate all stirring attorneys, regarded him with much malevolence; and, as he crossed the Poet in the thorny path of politics, it was reckoned a service rendered the cause of virtue when Burns lampooned him. It is said that as he lay on his death-bed, knock followed knock at his door, and creditor succeeded creditor so fast, demanding money, that the sinking man turned his face sullenly away, and muttered, "They winna let me die, by God!"]

‡ ["A melancholy person of the name of Glendinning having taken away his own life was interred at a place called 'The Old Chapel,' close beside Dumfries. Dr. Copland Hutchison happened to be walking out that way; he saw Burns with his foot on the grave, his hat on his knee, and paper laid on his hat, on which he was writing. He then took the paper, and thrust it with his finger into the red mould of the grave, and went away. This was the above epigram, and such was the Poet's mode of publishing it."—Allan Cunningham.]

§ [During the last illness of the Poet, Mr. Brown, the surgeon who attended him, came in, and stated that he had been looking at a collection of wild beasts just arrived, and, pulling out the list of the animals, held it out to Jessy Lewars. The Poet snatched it from him, took up a pen, and with red ink wrote the above verses on the back of the paper, saying, "Now it is fit to be presented to a lady" This precious relique is still in her possession.]

‖ [One day while the Poet was much indisposed, he observed Jessy Lewars moving, with a light foot, about the house, lest she should disturb him. He took up a crystal goblet containing wine and water for moistening his lips, wrote "The Toast" upon it with a diamond, and presented it to her. "She was," says Gilbert Burns, "a deservedly great favourite of the Poet and a soothing friend to Mrs. Burns at the time of his death."]

¶ [The constancy of her attendance and the anxiety of her mind made Jessy Lewars suffer a slight indisposition. "You must not die yet," said the Poet with a smile; "however, I shall provide for the worst. Give me that goblet, and I'll write your epitaph." He wrote these four lines with his diamond, and, presenting the goblet, said, "That will be a companion to 'The Toast.'"]

LXXIX.

On the Recovery of Jessy Lewars.

But rarely seen since nature's birth,
The natives of the sky;
Yet still one seraph's left on earth,
For Jessy did not die.*—R. B.

LXXX.

The Black-Headed Eagle.

A FRAGMENT,

ON THE DEFEAT OF THE AUSTRIANS BY DUMOURIER, AT GEMAPPE, NOVEMBER, 1792.

The black-headed eagle
As keen as a beagle,
He hunted o'er height and owre howe;
But fell in a trap
On the braes o' Gemappe,
E'en let him come out as he dowe.

LXXXI.

A Bottle and an Honest Friend.

There's nane that's blest of human kind,
But the cheerful and the gay, man.
Fal lal, &c.

I.

Here's a bottle and an honest friend!
What wad you wish for mair, man?
Wha kens, before his life may end,
What his share may be of care, man?

II.

Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man:
Believe me, happiness is shy,
And comes not aye when sought, man.

[These verses, which are printed in Cromek's Reliques, under the head of Song, are now given verbatim, with the addition of the chorus, from the original MS. in the Poet's handwriting. Gilbert Burns, however, in a letter to Cromek, dated February, 1809, expressed a doubt as to their having been written by his brother.]

LXXXII.

Grace after Dinner.

O Thou, in whom we live and move,
Who mad'st the sea and shore;
Thy goodness constantly we prove,
And, grateful, would adore.

And if it please Thee, Pow'r above,
Still grant us, with such store,
The friend we trust, the fair we love,
And we desire no more.

LXXXIII.

Another.

Lord, we thank an' thee adore,
For temp'ral gifts we little merit;
At present we will ask no more,
Let William Hyslop give the spirit!

LXXXIV.

To the Editor of the Star.

Dear Peter, dear Peter,
We poor sons of metre,
Are often negleckit, ye ken;†
For instance, your sheet, man,
(Though glad I'm to see't, man)
I get it no ae day in ten.

* [A little repose brought health back to the young lady. On this Burns said, smiling, "I knew you would get better; you have much to do before you die, believe me. Besides, there is a poetic reason for your recovery." So saying, he took up a pen and wrote the above.]

† [Burns at one period was in the habit of receiving the Star newspaper gratuitously from the publisher; but as it came irregularly to hand, he sent the above lines to head quarters, to insure more punctuality.]

END OF THE POEMS.

THE

SONGS AND BALLADS OF BURNS.

"By far the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns, are, without doubt, to be found among his Songs. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with the least obstruction, in its highest beauty and purest sunny clearness. The reason may be that song is a brief and simple species of composition, and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, and music of heart. The song has its rules equally with the tragedy,—rules which, in most cases, are poorly fulfilled, and in many cases not so much as felt. We reckon the songs of Burns by far the best which Britain has yet produced; for, indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that by any other hand aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. Independently of the clear, manly, and heart-felt sentiment that ever pervades his poetry, his songs are honest, in another point of view, in form as well as in spirit. They do not affect to be set to music; but they actually, and in themselves, are music. They have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of harmony, as Venus rose from the bottom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not told but suggested; not said or spouted in rhetorical completeness and coherence, but sung in fitful gushes, in glowing tints, in fantastic breaks,—in warblings, not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song, and that no songs, since the little careless catches, and, as it were, drops of song, which Shakspeare has here and there sprinkled over his plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as those of Burns. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, pre-supposes, in general, a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings! yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, and the purest rapture in his joy: he burns with the sternest ardour, or laughs with the loudest or slyest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft,—'sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear.' If we further take into account the immense variety of his subjects,—how, from the loud, flowing revel in 'Willie brewed a peck o' Maut,' to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for 'Mary in Heaven,'—from the glad, kind greeting of 'Auld lang-syne,' or the comic archness of 'Duncan Gray,' to the fire-eyed fury of 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,'—he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart. It will seem small praise if we rank him as the first of all our song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him. It is on his songs, as we believe, that his chief influence as an author will be found to depend; nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism be true, may we account this a small influence. 'Let me make the songs of a people,' said he, 'and you shall make their laws.' Surely, if ever a poet might have equalled himself with legislators, it was Burns. His songs are already part of the mother tongue, not only of Scotland, but of Britain, and of the millions that, in all ends of the earth, speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the hearts of men unfold themselves, in the joy and woe of existence, the name, the voice of that joy or woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them."—Carlisle.

My Handsome Nell.

Tune—*I am a man unmarried.*

I.

O, once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still;
And, whilst that virtue warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Nell.

Fal, lal de ral, &c.

II.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw;
But for a modest, gracefu' mien,
The like I never saw.

III.

A bonnie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e'e,
But without some better qualities,
She's no a lass for me.

IV.

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet,
And what is best of a'—
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

V.

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel:
An' then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

VI.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart;
But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

VII.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul!
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

Of this song the Poet's own account is the best:—"For my own part, I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. This composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of my life, when my heart glowed with honest, warm simplicity; unacquainted, and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly, but I am always pleased with it, as it recals to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed upon her. I not only had this opinion of her then, but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end....."

[The heroine of this song was Nelly Blair, a servant in the house of an extensive land-proprieter in Ayr-shire. Burns was a frequent visitor of this gentleman's kitchen in his younger days, and wrote many more songs on Nelly.]

THE
POET'S CRITICISM ON THE FOREGOING SONG.

In Burns's own memoranda are the following characteristic remarks:—"Lest my works should be thought below criticism, or meet with a critic who, perhaps, will not look on them with so candid and favourable an eye, I am determined to criticise them myself.

"The first distich of the first stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of our ordinary street ballads; and, on the other hand, the second distich is too much in the other extreme. The expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment a little too serious. Stanza the second I am well pleased with: and I think it conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the sex—the agreeables; or what in our Scottish dialect we call a *sweet sonsy lass*. The third stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it, and the third line has rather too serious a cast. The fourth stanza is a very indifferent one; the first line is, indeed, all in the strain of the second stanza, but the rest is mere expletive. The thoughts in the fifth stanza come finely up to my favourite idea —*a sweet sonsy lass:* the last line, however, halts a little. The same sentiments are kept up with equal spirit and tenderness in the sixth stanza: but the second and fourth lines, ending with short syllables, hurt the whole. The seventh stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts—my blood sallies, at the remembrance."

Luckless Fortune.

I.

O RAGING fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!
O raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!

II.

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow, O;
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow, O.

III.

But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O;
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O.

Burns tells us that he attempted to compose an air in the true Scottish style; but was not master of the science of music enough to enable him to prick down the notes, though they remained long on his memory. The tune consisted, he said, of three parts, and these words were the offspring of the same period, and echoed the air.—"My poor country muse," he says, in the memoranda where this song is inserted, "all rustic, awkward, and unpolished as she is, has more charms for me than any other of the pleasures of life beside—as I hope she will not desert me in misfortune, I may even then learn to be, if not happy, at least easy, and *sowth a sang* to soothe my misery."—(*September*, 1785.)

I Dream'd I Lay where Flowers were Springing.

I.

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were springing,
Gaily in the sunny beam;

List'ning to the wild birds singing,
By a falling, crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling, drumlie wave.

II.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd;
But lang or noon, loud tempests storming,
A' my flow'ry bliss destroy'd.
Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me,
(She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill;)
Of mony a joy and hope bereav'd me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

["The Poet was only seventeen years old when he wrote this melancholy song. The early days of Burns were typical of the latter. To-day, lively—to morrow, desponding: depressed in the morning by labour, he brightened up as the sun went down, and was ready for "a cannie hour" with the lass of his love—for a song vehemently joyous with his comrades—or a mason-meeting, where care was discharged, and merriment abounded."—CUNNINGHAM.]

O Tibbie, I hae seen the Day.

Tune—*Invercauld's Reel.*

CHORUS.

O TIBBIE, I hae seen the day,
Ye wad na been sae shy;
For laik o' gear ye lightly me,
But, trowth, I care na by.

YESTREEN I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure;
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But fient a hair care I.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er ye like to try.

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,
Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy quean
That looks sae proud and high.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
And answer him fu' dry.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he, for sense or lear,
Be better than the kye.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice;
The deil a ane wad spier your price,
Were ye as poor as I.

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I would nae gie her in her sark,
For thee, wi' a' thy thousan' mark!
Ye need na look sae high.

["This is one of the earliest of the Poet's compositions. The Tibbie wha "spak na, but gaed by like stoure," was the daughter of a portioner of Kyle—a man with three acres of peat moss—an inheritance which she thought entitled her to treat a landless wooer with disdain. The Bard said he composed it when about seventeen years of age, and perhaps the proud young lady neither looked for sweet song nor such converse as maidens love, from one of such tender years."—CUNNINGHAM.]

My Father was a Farmer.

Tune—*The Weaver and his Shuttle, O.*

I.

MY father was a farmer
Upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me
In decency and order, O;
He bade me act a manly part,
Though I had ne'er a farthing, O;
For without an honest manly heart,
No man was worth regarding, O.

II.

Then out into the world
My course I did determine, O;
Tho' to be rich was not my wish,
Yet to be great was charming, O:
My talents they were not the worst,
Nor yet my education, O;
Resolv'd was I, at least to try,
To mend my situation, O.

III.

In many a way, and vain essay,
I courted fortune's favour, O;
Some cause unseen still stept between,
To frustrate each endeavour, O:
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd;
Sometimes by friends forsaken, O;
And when my hope was at the top,
I still was worst mistaken, O.

IV.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last,
With fortune's vain delusion, O,

I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams,
  And came to this conclusion, O:
The past was bad, and the future hid;
  Its good or ill untried, O;
But the present hour was in my pow'r,
  And so I would enjoy it, O.

V.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I,
  Nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil,
  And labour to sustain me, O:
To plough and sow, to reap and mow,
  My father bred me early, O;
For one, he said, to labour bred,
  Was a match for fortune fairly, O.

VI.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor,
  Thro' life I'm doom'd to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay,
  In everlasting slumber, O.
No view nor care, but shun whate'er
  Might breed me pain or sorrow, O:
I live to-day as well's I may,
  Regardless of to-morrow, O:

VII.

But cheerful still, I am as well
  As a monarch in a palace, O,
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down,
  With all her wonted malice, O:
I make indeed my daily bread,
  But ne'er can make it farther, O;
But, as daily bread is all I need,
  I do not much regard her, O.

VIII.

When sometimes by my labour
  I earn a little money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune
  Comes gen'rally upon me, O:
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect,
  Or my good-natur'd folly, O;
But come what will, I've sworn it still,
  I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

IX.

All you who follow wealth and power
  With unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss,
  You leave your view the farther, O:
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts,
  Or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful honest-hearted clown
  I will prefer before you, O.

"The above song," says the Poet, "is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over." [It abounds with manly sentiments, and exhibits fortitude of mind amid the sorrows of the disastrous year 1783. Much of the early history of the Poet may be traced in this song.]

John Barleycorn.

A BALLAD.

THERE were three kings into the east,
  Three kings both great and high;
An' they ha'e swore a solemn oath
  John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
  Put clods upon his head;
And they ha'e swore a solemn oath
  John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
  And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
  And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,
  And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
  That no one should him wrong.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,
  When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
  Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
  He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
  To shew their deadly rage.

They've ta'en a weapon, long and sharp,
  And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
  Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
  And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
  And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
  With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
  There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
  To work him farther woe:
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
  They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame
  The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all—
  He crush'd him 'tween two stones.

And they ha'e ta'en his very heart's blood,
  And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
  Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
  Of noble enterprise;

For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy:
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!*

The Rigs o' Barley.

Tune—*Corn Rigs are Bonnie.*

I.

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie:
The time flew by, wi' tentless heed,
'Till 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me thro' the barley.

II.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley:
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely:
I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

III.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace!
Her heart was beating rarely:
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She aye shall bless that happy night,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

IV.

I hae been blithe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinkin'!
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin' gear;
I hae been happy thinkin':
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

CHORUS.

Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonnie:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

["It is generally believed in the west of Scotland that Annie Ronald, afterwards Mrs. Paterson of Aikenbrae, was the inspirer of this charming song. The freedom and warmth of the words probably induced her to disown it in her latter days. The Poet was a frequent visiter at her father's house while he continued at Mossgiel; and Mr. Ronald liked so much the conversation of his eloquent neighbour that he sat late with him on many occasions. This seems to have displeased another of his daughters, who said she "could na see ought about Robert Burns that would tempt her to sit up wi' him till twal o'clock at night." It is not known how far Annie Ronald joined in her sister's dislike of the Bard."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Montgomery's Peggy.

Tune—*Galla Water.*

Altho' my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy, happy would I be,
Had I my dear Montgomery's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat sturly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomery's Peggy.

Were I a baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin't wi' Montgomery's Peggy.

"This fragment is done," says Burns, "something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish piece, called M'Millan's Peggy. My

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* [It is intimated by Burns that John Barleycorn is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name; the ancient ballad is printed by Jamieson, who took it from a black-letter copy preserved in Pepys' library. But the more ancient name of John Barleycorn was Allan-a-Maut, in whose praise many songs still exist. "I am disposed," says Hogg, "to think with Jamieson, that Sir John Barleycorn had been originally an English ballad. I have heard old people sing it different from all the printed copies, when the following stanzas always occurred in it:—

"John Barleycorn's the ae best chiel
That e'er plew'd sea or land;
He can do the thing that none can do,
By the turning o' your hand.
He can turn a boy into a man,
A man into an ass;
He can turn your gold to white moneye,
Your white moneye to brass.
He can gar our lasses skip and dance
As naked as they were born,
And help them to a chap by chance,
This wee John Barleycorn."

The version of Burns is more consistent, but not more graphic, than the old strain.]

Montgomery's Peggy' was my deity for six or eight months. She had been bred in a style of life rather elegant; but, as Vanbrugh says, 'My damned star found me out' there, too; for though I began the affair merely in a *gaiete de cœur*, or to tell the truth, which will scarcely be believed, a vanity of shewing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a *billet doux*, on which I always piqued myself, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me, one day, in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been, for some time before, the rightful property of another; but, with the greatest friendship and politeness, she offered me every alliance except actual possession. It cost me some heart-aches to get rid of the affair. I have even tried to imitate, in this extempore thing, that irregularity in the rhyme which, when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on the ear." *

The Mauchline Lady.

Tune—*I had a Horse and I had nae Mair.*

When first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was na steady;
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,
A mistress still I had aye;

But when I came roun' by Mauchline town,
Not dreadin' ony body,
My heart was caught, before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

[The Mauchline lady who caught the Poet's heart was Jean Armour. The way in which they became acquainted is thus related:—Jean had laid some linen webs down to bleach, and was sprinkling them among the gowans with water, when Luath, the Poet's dog, ran across them with his dirty feet, and fawned upon her. She was ill pleased, and—

"E'en as he fawn'd, she strak the poor dumb tyke."

Burns reproached her in the words of Ramsay; she smiled, and so a friendship commenced, which was doomed to an early termination, and to give much of joy and woe."-Cunningham.]

The Highland Lassie.

Tune—*The Deuks dang o'er my Daddy!*

Nae gentle† dames, tho' e'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my muse's care:
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my Highland Lassie, O.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plains sae rushy, O,
I set me down wi' right good will,
To sing my Highland Lassie, O.

Oh, were yon hills and valleys mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland Lassie, O.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea!
But while my crimson currents flow,
I'll love my Highland Lassie, O.

Altho' through foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland Lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,
For her I'll trace the distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland Lassie, O.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
'Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland Lassie, O!

Fareweel the glen sae bushy, O!
Fareweel the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland Lassie, O!

"My Highland Lassie," observes Burns, "was a warm-hearted, charming young creature, as ever blest a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of the Ayr, where we spent the day in taking a farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands, to

* [Of M'Millan's Peggy various verses are yet remembered;—

"O I wad gie my guid braid sword,
And sae wad I my tartan plaidie,
Gin I were twenty miles o'er the Forth,
And along wi' me my bonnie Peggie.

He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himsel upon a guid grey naigie;
And he rode over hills, and he rode through bowes,
And he rode quite away with his bonnie Peggie:

Until that he came to a lone, lone glen,
Enough to frighten the bauldest bodie;
This glen's thy room, and thy lamp yon moon—
Light down, light down, my bonnie Peggie.

He's made her a bed o' the breckans green,
And her covering o' his tartan plaidie;
And the simmer moon looked smiling down,
To see him watch his sleeping lady."

Montgomery's Peggy was a fair maid of the name of Peggy Thomson, whom the Poet also celebrates in another song, "Now westlin' wind's and slaught'ring guns." She became the wife of a person named Neilson, and long lived in Ayr.]

† *Gentle* is used here in opposition to *simple*, in the Scottish and old English sense of the word.—

Nae gentle dames—No high-blooded dames.

arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of autumn she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave, before I could even hear of her illness."

Peggy.

Tune—*I had a Horse, I had nae mair.*

I.

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer; [night,
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at
To muse upon my charmer.

II.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains:
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves
The path of man, to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

III.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine;
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away! the cruel sway,
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

IV.

But Peggy, dear, the ev'ning's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading-green and yellow:
Come, let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And ev'ry happy creature.

V.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be, as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

[The heroine of this song was "Montgomery's Peggy," who permitted the Poet to lavish on her all the choicest things of prose and verse, and then quietly said she was sorry her charms had made such havoc in his heart, for she was the lawful property of another, and had not the power of rewarding his raptures.]

O that I had ne'er been Married.

O THAT I had ne'er been married,
I wad never had nae care;
Now I've gotten wife and bairns,
An' they cry crowdie ever mair.
Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day,
Gin ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

Waefu' want and hunger fley me,
Glowrin' by the hallan en';
Sair I fecht them at the door,
But aye I'm eerie they come ben.
Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day;
Gin ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

[This song appears in the "Musical Museum," where it is stated to be "corrected by R. Burns." The chorus is old. The last verse is supposed to have been added by the Poet.]

The Rantin' Dog the Daddie o't.

Tune—*East nook o' Fife.*

I.

O WHA my babie-clouts will buy?
O wha will tent me when I cry?
Wha will kiss me where I lie?—
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

II.

O wha will own he did the fau't?
O wha will buy the groanin' maut?
O wha will tell me how to ca't?—
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

III.

When I mount the creepie chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I'll seek nae mair,
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

IV.

Wha will crack to me my lane?
Wha will mak me fidgin' fain?*
Wha will kiss me o'er again?—
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

* Fidgin-fain — Fidgetting with delight — Tickled with pleasure.

[The hapless heroine of this humorous ditty was the mother of "Sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess."—"I composed it, says the Poet, "pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at that time under a cloud." In his muse, Burns found relief from severer reflection, when brooding over the consequences of juvenile indiscretion; and in this song, even the misfortunes of the mother are made light of, in a vein of raillery and humour peculiarly his own.]

My Heart was ance as Blithe and Free.

Tune—*To the Weavers gin ye go.**

I.

My heart was ance as blythe and free
As simmer days were lang,
But a bonnie, westlin weaver lad
Has gart me change my sang.
To the weavers gin ye go, fair maids,
To the weavers gin ye go;
I rede you right gang ne'er at night,
To the weavers gin ye go.

II.

My mither sent me to the town,
To warp a plaiden wab;
But the weary, weary warpin o't
Has gart me sigh and sab.

III.

A bonnie, westlin weaver lad
Sat working at his loom;
He took my heart as wi' a net,
In every knot and thrum.

IV.

I sat beside my warpin-wheel,
And aye I ca'd it roun';
But every shot and every knock,
My heart it gae a stoun.

V.

The moon was sinking in the west
Wi' visage pale and wan,
As my bonnie westlin weaver lad
Convoy'd me thro' the glen.

VI.

But what was said, or what was done,
Shame fa' me gin I tell;
But, oh! I fear the kintra soon
Will ken as weel's mysel.
To the weavers gin ye go, fair maids,
To the weavers gin ye go;
I rede you right gang ne'er at night,
To the weavers gin ye go.

* [The chorus of this song is taken from the following ancient ditty.

The weaver, the weaver,
The weaver o' the green,
There will something fa' the weaver
That dwells in Muir o' Steen.

To the weaver gin ye go,
To the weaver gin ye go;
Ye'll need somebody wi' ye,
To the weaver gin ye go.
The weaver he's a cunning loon,
(There's few o' them ca'd leel,)
* * * *
The remainder of the verse is inadmissible.]

["The chorus of this song is old," says Burns in his notes on the Musical Museum; "the rest of it is mine." The lass whom it celebrates belonged to Mauchline; and one summer evening, when he desired to escort her home, he found himself anticipated by

"A bonnie westlin weaver lad,"

and wrote the song in consequence. "Here, once for all," he writes, "let me apologise for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words; and, in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together any thing near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass."

"No one unacquainted with the domestic economy of Scotland can understand some of the allusions in this song. Thrift, in the days of Burns, was not wholly abandoned: the wives of our husbandmen spun their wool and flax, and sent the yarn and thread to the weaver to be manufactured into cloth—not for sale, but for home consumption. In this way sack-cloth for the corn, plaiding for the beds, linen for the body, and broadcloth and stuffs for daily and even holiday wear, were produced. The heroine of the song was despatched with yarn to the weavers; and the warping alluded to was the act of preparing it for the loom."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Gude'en to you, Kimmer.

Tune—*We're a' noddin.*

I.

GUDE'EN to you, kimmer,
And how de ye do?
Hiccup, quo kimmer,
The better that I'm fou.
We're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin at our house at hame.

II.

Kate sits i' the neuk,
Suppin' hen broo;
Deil tak' Kate,
An' she be na noddin too!

III.

How's a' wi' you, kimmer,
And how do ye fare?
A pint o' the best o't,
And twa pints mair.

IV.

How's a' wi you, kimmer,
And how do ye thrive?

How mony bairns hae ye?
Quo' kimmer, I hae five.

V.

Are they a' Johnny's?
Eh! atweel na:
Twa o' them were gotten
When Johnny was awa.

VI.

Cats like milk,
And dogs like broo,
Lads like lasses weel,
And lasses lads too.
We're a' noddin, nid nid noddin,
We're a' noddin at our house at hame.*

[This song appears in the Musical Museum, The verses were corrected and improved by the hand of Burns.]

My Nannie, O.

Tune—*My Nannie, O.*

I.

Behind yon hills, where Lugar flows,†
'Mang moors and mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.

II.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hills to Nannie, O.

III.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.

IV.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonnie, O:
The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

V.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be?
I'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.

VI.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a', my Nannie, O.

VII.

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nannie, O.

VIII.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O.

[Nannie Fleming, a servant in Calcothill, near Lochlea, was the heroine of this fine song. She died unmarried and well advanced in life. When questioned about the Poet's attachment she said, "Aye, atweel he made a great wark about me." Like most of the favourites of Burns, she was more remarkable for the symmetry of her limbs than the beauty of her face. She was modest and cheerful, and had a winning manner. In Burns's Common Place Book, we find the following remarks, dated April, 1784:—"Shenstone finely observes that love-verses, writ without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it; for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature. Whether 'My Nannie, O!' will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was, at the time, genuine from the heart."

This fine air attracted minstrels before the days of Burns. The "Nannie, O!" of Allan Ramsay will be long remembered.

"How joyfully my spirits rise
When, dancing, she moves finely, O!
I guess what heaven is by her eyes,
They sparkle so divinely, O.‡

---

* [There is another version of the sixth verse and the chorus, in the Poet's handwriting, which we subjoin:—

The cats like kitchen;
The dogs like broo:
The lasses like the lads weel,
And th' auld wives too,

CHORUS.

And we're a' noddin,
Nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin *fou at e'en.*

See Letter to Mr. Robert Ainslie, jun., dated 23rd August, 1787.]

† [The stream commemorated in this song was originally Stinchar. In his letter to Mr. Thomson, *q. v.*, Burns gives very excellent reasons for the change. In the copy printed in Johnson's Museum the first line reads

"Behind yon hills where riv'lets flow."]

‡ [The following version of the elder lyric is given from oral recitation;

"As I came in by Enbro' town,
By the side o' the bonny city, O,
I heard a young man mak his moan,
And O! it was a pity, O.
For aye he cried his Nannie, O!
His handsome, charming Nannie, O!

A Fragment.

Tune—*John Anderson my Jo.*

ONE night as I did wander,
When corn begins to shoot,
I sat me down, to ponder,
Upon an auld tree root:
Auld Ayr ran by before me,
And bicker'd to the seas;
A cushat* crowded o'er me,
That echo'd thro' the braes.

[Burns sometimes hit upon one happy stanza, but not falling readily again into the same train of thought, allowed it to remain a fragment. Such *morceaux* are, however, valuable. Some gifted son of song, on a future day, may take a liking for the verse, and eke it out in the same spirit and feeling with which the Poet of Ayr has commenced it. Burns completed many of our melodies in the same manner.]

O why the Deuce should I repine.

I.

O WHY the deuce should I repine,
An' be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine—
I'll go and be a sodger.

II.

I gat some gear wi' meikle care,
I held it weel thegither;
But now it's gane, and something mair—
I'll go and be a sodger.

[The above is an early production of the Bard, written extempore, and dated April, 1782.]

Robin Shure in Hairst.

CHORUS.

ROBIN shure in hairst,
I shure wi' him;
Fient a heuk had I,
Yet I stack by him.

I.

I gaed up to Dunse,
To warp a wab o' plaiden;
At his daddie's yett,
Wha met me but Robin?

II.

Was na Robin bauld,
Though I was a cotter,
Play'd me sic a trick,
And me the eller's dochter?

III.

Robin promis'd me
A' my winter vittle;
Fient haet he had but three
Goose feathers and a whittle.
Robin Shure, &c.

[This and the following song appears in the Musical Museum, with Burns's name attached to them.]

Sweetest May.

SWEETEST May, let love inspire thee;
Take a heart which he desires thee;
As thy constant slave regard it;
For its faith and truth reward it.

Proof o' shot to birth or money,
Not the wealthy, but the bonnie;
Not high-born, but noble-minded,
In love's silken band can bind it!

When I think on the Happy Days.

I.

WHEN I think on the happy days
I spent wi' you, my dearie;
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie!

II.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary!
It was na sae ye glinted by
When I was wi' my dearie.

[This beautiful song is printed from the original MS. in the Poet's hand-writing.]

Nor friend nor foe can tell, O—ho
How dearly I love Nannie, O.

Some delight in cards and dice,
And other some in brandy, O,
But my delight's in a bonnie lass,
Her name is lovely Nannie, O.

Some will pu' the bonnie pink,
And other some the tansy, O,
But I will pu' the red red rose,
The colour o' my Nancie, O!

As I cam doun the toun yestreen,
The young men there stood many, O,
And ilka ane bade me guid e'en,
But envy'd me my Nannie, O.

O Sandy, ye'll tak my advice,
And tak it firm and steady, O,
Gin ye will marry a laird's dochter,
Because her tocher's ready, O.

O father, I'll gie my advice,
Gin ye would nae be angry, O,
Though I would marry the laird's dochter,
I would die for my Nannie, O.

I'd rather Nannie in her sark,
O dear, she's young and bonnie, O,
Than Jenny, wi' ten thousand mark,
She's black compared wi' Nannie, O.

For aye he cried his Nannie, O,
His handsome, charming Nannie, O;
Nor friend nor foe can tell O—ho,
How dearly I love Nannie, O."]

* A dove or wild pigeon.

Bonnie Peggy Alison.

Tune—*Braes o' Balquhidder.*

CHORUS.

I'LL kiss thee yet, yet,
An' I'll kiss thee o'er again;
An' I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonnie Peggy Alison!

I.

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,
I ever mair defy them, O;
Young kings upon their hansel throne
Are nae sae blest as I am, O!

II.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure, O,
I seek nae mair o' Heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!

III.

And by thy een, sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever, O!—
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never, O!
I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
An' I'll kiss thee o'er again;
An' I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonnie Peggy Alison!

[" Bonnie Peggy Alison was Montgomery's Peggy, the subject of other songs, and the object of eight months' fruitless wooing. The Poet, it is said, exhausted all his knowledge in the art of courting to win the affections of this coy dame; he was to be seen sauntering about, watching her windows during the evening, musing in her favourite walks during the day, and, when in some propitious moment she consented to meet him after night-fall, he might be observed lingering nigh the "trysting tree" an hour before the appointed time. He sought the acquaintance of all whom he imagined could influence her, and urged and wooed with all his impassioned eloquence. Peggie was pleased with all this—she loved praise, and loved the Poet's company. The cause of her coldness has already been related.

It was an early communication, though unacknowledged, to the Museum. Clark the composer was fond of it; Cromek, who had all Johnson's correspondence through his hands, saw it in the hand-writing of Burns, and inserted it in the Reliques."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Green grow the Rashes, O!

A FRAGMENT.

Tune—*Green grow the Rashes.*

CHORUS.

GREEN grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O

I.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O?

II.

The warl'ly race my riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them. O.

III.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O:
An' warl'ly cares, an' warl'ly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O.

IV.

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this,
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

V.

Auld Nature swears the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her ' prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.
Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend
Are spent amang the lasses, O.

[The "Green grow the rashes" of our ancestors had both spirit and freedom:—

"Green grow the Rashes, O,
Green grow the Rashes, O;
Nae feather-bed was e'er sae saft
As a bed amang the rashes, O."

"We're a' dry wi' drinking o't,
We're a' dry wi' drinking o't;
The parson kiss'd the fiddler's wife,
And he could na preach for thinking o't.

The down bed, the feather bed,
The bed amang the rashes, O!
Yet a' the beds are nae sae saft
As the bosoms o' the lasses, O."

["Burns calls this inimitable song a fragment, and says it speaks the genuine language of his heart. The incense in the concluding verse is the richest any poet ever offered at the shrine of beauty.

The following passage of "Cupid's Whirlygig," published in 1607, contains the express sentiments of the poet of Scotland:—

"How have I wronged thee? Oh! who would abuse your sex who truly knows ye? O women, were we not born of you? Should we not, then, honour you? Nursed by you, and not regard you? Made for you, and not seek you? And since we were made before you, should we not love and admire you as the last, and, therefore, perfect work of nature? Man

was made when nature was but an apprentice; but woman, when she was a skilful mistress of her art; therefore, cursed is he that doth not admire those paragons, those models of heaven, angels on earth, goddesses in shape!"]

My Jean!

Tune—*The Northern Lass.*

THO' cruel fate should bid us part,
Far as the pole and line,
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.
Tho' mountains rise, and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between;
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

[The heroine of this sweet snatch was "Bonnie Jean." It was composed when the Poet contemplated the West India voyage, and an eternal separation from the land and all that was dear to him. It is written to the air of an English song of the same name: some of the verses of which are pleasing:—

"Come, take your glass, the Northern Lass
So prettily advised;
I drank her health, and really was
Agreeably surprised.
Her shape so neat, her voice so sweet,
Her air and mien so free;
The syren charm'd me from my meat,—
But, take your drink, said she.

"If from the North such beauty came,
How is it that I feel
Within my breast that glowing flame,
No tongue can e'er reveal?
Though cold and raw the north winds blow,
All summer's in her breast;
Her skin is like the driven snow,
But sunshine all the rest."]

Robin.

Tune—*Daintie Davie.*

I.

THERE was a lad was born in Kyle,*
But what' n a day o' what' n a style
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin!

II.

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five and twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar win'
Blew hansel in on Robin.

III.

The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' she, wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof—
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

IV.

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a';
He'll be a credit 'till us a',
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

V.

But, sure as three times three mak nine,
I see, by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee, Robin.

VI.

Guid faith, quo' she, I doubt ye gar,
The bonnie lasses lie aspar,
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur,
So blessin's on thee, Robin!
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin!

[This mirthful song was an early composition. All who are acquainted with humble life in the north will see at once the truth and the force of the Poet's picture. A male child has been born—the gossips are gathered about the bed—and a cummer, skilful in palmistry, reads his fortune from his fist. She sees much of the dark, but more of the bright; and, as the gossip-cup has probably run to her head, she dilates with much freedom on his future exploits.

Stothard painted a small picture from this clever ditty. The cannie wife stood with little Robin laid backwards in her left arm; with her right hand she had opened his palm, and it was quite evident that she saw something which tickled her: a curious intelligence sparkled the faces of her gossips, and they said, or seemed to say—

"Blessin's on thee, Robin!"

CUNNINGHAM.]

Her Flowing Locks.

Tune—(Unknown.)

HER flowing locks, the raven's wing,
Adown her neck and bosom hing;
How sweet unto that breast to cling,
And round that neck entwine her!

* A district of Ayr-shire.

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,
O, what a feast her bonnie mou'!
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,
A crimson still diviner.

[The Poet one day had his foot in the stirrup ready to mount his horse, and return from Ayr to Mauchline, when a young lady of great beauty rode up to the inn, and caused some refreshments to be given to her servants. The Poet composed these beautiful lines at the moment, merely, he said, to keep so much loveliness on his memory, and on the same principle that a painter contents himself with a sketch, when he has not leisure for a finished picture. The fragment was found among his papers, and was first printed by Cromek.]

Mauchline Belles.

Tune—*Mauchline Belles.*

I.

O LEAVE novels, ye Mauchline belles!
Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks
For rakish rooks—like Rob Mossgiel.

II.

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
They make your youthful fancies reel;
They heat your veins, and fire your brains,
And then ye're prey for Rob Mossgiel.

III.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung,
A heart that warmly seems to feel;
That feeling heart but acts a part—
'Tis rakish art in Rob Mossgiel.

IV.

The frank address, the soft caress,
Are worse than poison'd darts of steel;
The frank address, and politesse,
Are all finesse in Rob Mossgiel.

[The advice which the Poet tendered was certainly a very honest one; but, like other unsought-for counsel, it was, perhaps, not much regarded. These verses were written before his marriage.]

In the following song "Rob of Mossgiel" tells us who were the belles, concerning whose moral and intellectual culture he was so much interested:—

The Belles of Mauchline.

Tune—*Bonnie Dundee.*

I.

IN Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
The pride o' the place and its neighbour-hood a';
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
In Lon'on or Paris they'd gotten it a':

II.

Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw;
There's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,
But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'.

[Burns was intimately acquainted with the somewhat romantic mode of wooing which prevails among the peasantry, and had practised all its mysteries. The above was one of the earliest productions of the Poet.—Miss Armour became Mrs. Burns.]

Hunting Song.

Tune—*I rede you beware at the hunting.*

I.

THE heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
Our lads gaed a-hunting ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors and o'er mosses, and mony a glen,
At length they discover'd a bonnie moor-hen.
I rede you beware at the hunting, young men;
I rede you beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak' some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonnie moor-hen.

II.

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells;
Her plumage outlustr'd the pride o' the spring,
And O! as she wantoned gay on the wing.

III.

Auld Phœbus himsel', as he peep'd o'er the hill,
In spite, at her plumage he tried his skill;
He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae—
His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay.

IV.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill,
The best of our lads, wi' the best o' their skill;

But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
Then, whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight.
I rede you beware at the hunting, young men;
I rede you beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak' some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonnie moor-hen.

Young Peggy.

Tune—*Last time I cam o'er the Muir.*

I.

Young Peggy blooms our bonniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
With pearly gems adorning:
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

II.

Her lips, more than the cherries bright,
A richer dye has grac'd them;
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,
And sweetly tempt to taste them;
Her smile is, like the evening, mild,
When feather'd tribes are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

III.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
Such sweetness would relent her;
As blooming Spring unbends the brow
Of surly, savage Winter.
Detraction's eye no aim can gain,
Her winning powers to lessen;
And spiteful Envy grins in vain,
The poison'd tooth to fasten.

IV.

Ye Powers of Honour, Love, and Truth,
From every ill defend her;
Inspire the highly-favour'd youth
The destinies intend her;
Still fan the sweet connubial flame,
Responsive in each bosom;
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.

["In these flattering stanzas Burns bade farewell to one whom he had wooed for eight months, and solicited much by speech and song. Montgomery's Peggy seems to have been little moved by the sweet things of verse and prose; she, perhaps, preferred a swain who, like the miller, in another ditty, could bring in money and meal to one who seemed skilful only at courting and complimenting. Peggy, in her marriage, showed that she preferred "corn-rigs" to music and poetry—she was worldly-wise, and in no way romantic in her affections."—Cunningham.]

The Cure for all Care.

Tune—*Prepare, my dear Brethren, to the Tavern let's fly.*

I.

No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving a snare—
For a big-belly'd bottle's the whole of my care.

II.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

III.

Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse;
There centum per centum, the cit with his purse;
But see you the Crown, how it waves in the air!
There a big-belly'd bottle still eases my care.

IV.

The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon proved it fair,
That a big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all care.

V.

I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;—
But the pursy old landlord just waddl'd up stairs,
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

VI.

"Life's cares they are comforts,"* —a maxim laid down [black gown;
By the bard, what d'ye call him, that wore the
And faith, I agree with th' old prig to a hair;
For a big-belly'd bottle's a heav'n of a care.

VII.

A STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper, and make it o'erflow,
And honours masonic prepare for to throw;
May ev'ry true brother of the compass and square [care!
Have a big-belly'd bottle when harass'd with

[Masonic lyrics are generally about the plea-

* Young's Night Thoughts.

sures of the table, or other friendly socialities, and deal in dark allusions to the

"Mason's mystic word and grup."

Some of them perceive freemasonry in all things; and one, in particular, hesitates not to claim Eve as a comrade of the mystic order, for—

"A fig-leaf apron she put on,
To show her masonrie."

Tarbolton Lodge, of which the Poet was a member, had considerable fame in the west for its socialities, and also for its deep knowledge in the mysteries of masonry. The reputation of the Lodge of Kilmarnock is of old standing; indeed, the west of Scotland has long been famous for its associations, social, political, and religious."]—CUNNINGHAM.

Eliza.

Tune—*Gilderoy.*

I.

From thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore;
The cruel Fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar:
But boundless oceans, roaring wide,
Between my love and me,
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee!

II.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in mine ear,
We part to meet no more!
The latest throb that leaves my heart,
While death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh!*

[" To the heroine of this song the Poet's thoughts turned when, rejected of Jean Armour, he wrote his pathetic "Lament." She is the Miss Betty of one of his epigrams, where he praises her taste in dress; and she figures in the first edition of the "Vision." He is speaking of Coila:—

" Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
'Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my Bess I ween
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else cam near it."

My friend John Galt informed me that this lady was his relative: he said her name was Elizabeth Barbour; she was handsome rather than beautiful, very lively and of ready wit.

The Poet seems to have realized in his loves the fortune of the "wight of Homer's craft," in the "Jolly Beggars." When change of mind, marriage, or other casualties, carried away one of his heroines, he could sing, with justice,

"I've lost but ane, I've twa behin."

Or, if not content with what remained, his youth and eloquence soon supplied the vacancy with a lass from Lugar, or from Cessnock-bank. When he made his appearance among the polished dames of Edinburgh, he found that the language which caused the maids to listen on the Ayr and Doon wrought the same enchantment elsewhere."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Sons of Old Killie.

Tune—*Shawnboy.*

I.

Ye sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie,
To follow the noble vocation;
Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
To sit in that honoured station.
I've little to say, but only to pray,
As praying's the ton of your fashion;
A prayer from the muse you well may excuse,
'Tis seldom her favourite passion.

II.

Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide,
Who marked each element's border;
Who formed this frame with beneficent aim,
Whose sovereign statute is order;
Within this dear mansion may wayward contention
Or withered envy ne'er enter;
May secrecy round be the mystical bound,
And brotherly love be the centre!

[The original, in the Poet's handwriting,

* [Eliza long survived the Poet, and, if we may judge from the following obituary notice of her, she must have been a person somewhat above the common standard:

"At Alva, on the 28th ult. [1827], in the 74th year of her age, Mrs. Elizabeth Black, relict of the late Mr. James Stewart, Vintner, there. Though early deprived of her partner, Mrs. Stewart, in her guarded walk and conversation, during the many years she spent in Alva, threw such a moral halo around her character as secured for her the unceasing esteem and good wishes of her fellow-villagers. * * She was Burns's "ELIZA." She was born and brought up in Ayr-shire, and in the bloom of youth was possessed of no ordinary share of personal charms. She early became acquainted with Burns, and made no small impression on his heart. She possessed several love-epistles he had addressed to her. It was when Scotia's bard intended emigrating from his own to a foreign shore, that he wrote the stanzas beginning

"From thee, Eliza, I must go,"

the subject being, of course, Elizabeth Black."]

belongs to Gabriel Neil, Glasgow, and has the following note attached to it:—"This song, wrote by Mr. Burns, was sung by him in the Kilmarnock Kilwinning Lodge, in 1786, and given by him to Mr. Parker, who was Master of the Lodge."]

Menie.*

Tune—*Johnny's Grey Breeks.*

I.

AGAIN rejoicing nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues,
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

CHORUS.†

And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
For it's jet, jet black, and it's like a hawk,
And it winna let a body be!

II.

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me, in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the lintwhite sing.

III.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks;
But life to me's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.

IV.

The wanton coot the water skims,
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And every thing is blest but I.

V.

The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap,
And owre the moorlands whistles shrill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.

VI.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blythe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.

VII.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When nature all is sad like me!
And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
For it's jet, jet black, and it's like a hawk,
And it winna let a body be.

* Menie is the common abbreviation of Mariamne. Who the heroine was has not transpired.

† This chorus is part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author. R. B.

Katherine Jaffray.

I.

THERE liv'd a lass in yonder dale,
And down in yonder glen, O!
And Katherine Jaffray was her name,
Weel known to many men, O!

II.

Out came the Lord of Lauderdale,
Out frae the South countrie, O!
All for to court this pretty maid,
Her bridegroom for to be, O!

III.

He's tell'd her father and mother baith,
As I hear sundry say, O!
But he has na tell'd the lass hersel,
'Till on her wedding day, O!

IV.

Then came the Laird o' Lochinton,
Out frae the English border,
All for to court this pretty maid,
All mounted in good order.

[This Song is printed from a copy in the Poet's own hand, and appears in Pickering's Edition of the Poetical Works of Robert Burns. London, 1839.]

THE FAREWELL
TO THE
Brethren of St. James's Lodge,
TARBOLTON.

Tune—*Good night, and Joy be wi' you a'!*

I.

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the mystic tie!
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy!
Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, tho' far awa'.

II.

Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft, honor'd with supreme command,
Presided o'er the sons of light:
And, by that hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but craftsmen ever saw!
Strong mem'ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa'!

III.

May freedom, harmony, and love,
Unite you in the grand design,
Beneath th' Omniscient eye above,
The glorious Architect Divine!
That you may keep th' unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
Till order bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray'r when far awa'.

IV.

And You* farewell! whose merits claim,
Justly, that highest badge to wear!
Heav'n bless your honor'd, noble name,
To masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round—I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.

[The Poet, it is said, recited or rather chanted this "Farewell" in the St. James's Lodge of Tarbolton, when his chest was on the way to Greenock, and he had composed the last song he ever expected to measure in Caledonia. The concluding verse affected his friends greatly. The voice of Burns was low, strong, and musical; when in the church, he usually joined in the bass, and good singers observed that he was ever in harmony. This song was first printed in the Kilmarnock edition:—several of the gentlemen who heard the Poet chant it are still living in the west of Scotland.]

On Cessnock Banks.

Tune—*If he be a butcher neat and trim.*

I.

On Cessnock banks there lives a lass,
Could I describe her shape and mien;
The graces of her weelfar'd face,
And the glancin' of her sparklin' een.

II.

She's fresher than the morning dawn
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
When dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

III.

She's stately, like yon youthful ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And shoots its head above each bush;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

IV.

She's spotless as the flow'ring thorn,
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

V.

Her looks are like the sportive lamb,
When flow'ry May adorns the scene,
That wantons round its bleating dam;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

VI.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That shades the mountain-side at e'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

VII.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When shining sunbeams intervene,
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

VIII.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

IX.

Her lips are like the cherries ripe
That sunny walls from Boreas screen—
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

X.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep:
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

XI.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas,
An' she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.

XII.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen
But the mind that shines in ev'ry grace
An' chiefly in her sparklin' een.†

---

* Sir John Whitefoord, the Grand Master.

† [The above exquisite song was published by Cromek. It was published from the oral communications of a lady residing at Glasgow, whom the bard in early life affectionately admired; and, he adds, "it was an early introduction." The following improved version has been transcribed from the Poet's own manuscript. It contains an additional verse; and the song is now presumed to be correctly printed. We are indebted to Pickering's edition of the Poetical Works of Burns for this precious gem.]

[The fair lass of Cessnock banks inspired a song of similes. Her looks were likened to those of the sportive lamb, and her teeth to the white fleeces of a newly-washen flock of sheep; her locks to the curling mist of the mountain; her breath to the fragrance of the summer wind among the blossomed bean, and her voice to the note of the thrush

"That sings in Cessnock banks unseen."

The name of the heroine has not transpired: her figure was tall, for the Poet compares her to a stately ash-tree; and her eyes were bright, for their sparkling forms the o'er-word of the song.]

On Cessnock Banks.

IMPROVED VERSION.

Tune—*If he be a butcher neat and trim.*

I.

On Cessnock banks *a lassie dwells;*
Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lasses a' she far excels,—
An' she 's twa sparkling, rogueish een.

II.

She's *sweeter* than the morning dawn,
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

III.

She's stately, like yon youthful ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

IV.

She's spotless *like* the flow'ring thorn,
With flow'rs so white, and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

V.

Her looks are like the *vernal May,*
When ev'ning Phœbus shines serene,
While birds rejoice on every spray;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

VI.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That climbs the mountain-sides at e'en,
When flow'r reviving rains are past;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

VII.

Her forehead 's like the show'ry bow,
When *gleaming* sunbeams intervene,
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

VIII.

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
The pride of all the flow'ry scene,
Just op'ning on its thorny stem;
And she 's twa sparkling, rogueish een.

IX.

Her teeth are like the nightly snow,
When pale the morning rises keen,
While hid the murm'ring streamlets flow;
An' she 's twa sparkling, rogueish een.

X.

Her lips are like *yon* cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from Boreas screen,
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she 's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

XI.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas;
An' she's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

XII.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush,
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she's twa sparkling, *rogueish* een.

XIII.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen,
'Tis the mind that shines in every grace;
An' chiefly in her *rogueish* een.

Mary!

Tune—*Blue Bonnets.*

I.

Powers celestial! whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care;
Let her form sae fair and faultless,
Fair and faultless as your own,
Let my Mary's kindred spirit
Draw your choicest influence down.

II.

Make the gales you waft around her
Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
Soothe her bosom into rest:
Guardian angels! O protect her,
When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
Make her bosom still my home!

["In the manuscript of the Poet this fine song is simply called "A Prayer for Mary;" and there can scarcely be imagined one breathing better and purer feelings. Burns contemplated an arrangement of all his lyric compositions sometime before his death, and it was his intention to add notes indicating the circumstances under which they were composed, and the names of the heroines.

"The faultless form and gentle spirit of the inspirer of these verses incline us to believe that

Highland Mary was intended. Burns put almost every event of his early life, and every throb of his heart, into verse. He was shut out from knowledge; his society consisted of men of ordinary minds, from whom little could be learned; he saw nothing of the polite, of the learned, or the mercantile world; he seems not to have aspired to imitate the strains of the southern bards; he allowed his muse to do as she listed, and his song was of the maidens of Kyle and his humble compeers of the hamlet. The air of the song is true old pastoral."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Lass of Ballochmyle.

Tune—*Miss Forbes's Farewell to Banff.*

I.

'TWAS even—the dewy fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang,
The zephyrs wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang:
In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,
All nature listening seem'd the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang,
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.*

II

With careless step I onward stray'd,
My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,
When musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy;
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like nature's vernal smile,
Perfection whisper'd, passing by,
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!†

III.

Fair is the morn in flow'ry May,
And sweet is night in autumn mild;
When roving thro' the garden gay,
Or wand'ring in the lonely wild:
But Woman, Nature's darling child!
There all her charms she does compile;
Ev'n there her other works are foil'd
By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

IV.

O! had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Tho' shelter'd in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotland's plain:
Thro' weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle!

* ["The braes of Ballochmyle extend along the right or north bank of the Ayr, between the village of Catrine and Howford Bridges, and are situated at the distance of about two miles from Burns's farm of Mossgiel. They form the most important part of the pleasure grounds of Ballochmyle House, the seat of Claud Alexander, Esq.

A short while before the incident which gave rise to the song, Ballochmyle, its broad lands, and lovely braes, had been parted with by the representative of an old and once powerful Ayr-shire family, Sir John Whitefoord. Burns had sung this incident also, in a set of plaintive verses, referring to the grief of Maria Whitefoord, now Mrs. Cranston, on leaving her family inheritance:—

"Through faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel' in beauty's bloom the while,
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fare well the braes o' Ballochmyle."

Ballochmyle was purchased from Sir John Whitefoord by Claud Alexander, Esq., a gentleman of considerable fortune, whose family had been formerly possessed of property in the County of Ayr, and whose ancestors were descended from Alexander of Menstrie (first Baron of Menstrie, and afterwards created Earl of Stirling).

Mr. Alexander had recently taken possession of the mansion, when, one summer evening, his sister, Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, a young lady distinguished by every grace of person and mind, walking out along the braes, after dinner, encountered a plain-looking man, in rustic attire, who appeared to be musing, with his shoulder placed against one of the trees. The grounds being forbidden to unauthorized strangers, the evening being far advanced, and the encounter very sudden, she was startled, but instantly recovered herself and passed on. She thought no more of the matter till some months after she received a letter from Burns, recalling the circumstance to her mind, and enclosing the rich descriptive stanzas just quoted. The exact or direct purpose of this letter has been disguised by Dr. Currie, in consequence of the omission of the concluding sentence, in which the Poet requested Miss Alexander's permission *to print the verses* in the second Edition of his Poems. We are therefore to consider his resentment of the lady's silence as not altogether based on the supposition of her having slighted his poetical powers. Burns would probably feel chagrined at not receiving either her permission to print the poem, or a statement of reasons for the contrary, besides, perhaps experiencing some mortification under the reflection that his talents did not appear sufficient, in the eyes of this young lady, even when employed in celebrating her own charms, to entitle him to the honor of her correspondence. Miss Alexander has been blamed by various writers for her reserve; and certainly it is now to be regretted that she was not so fortunate as to cultivate the friendship of the Poet."

† VAR.—The lily's hue and rose's dye
Bespoke the lass o' Ballochmyle.

"The heroine of the braes of Ballochmyle has since displayed no imperfect sense of the honour which the genius of Burns conferred upon her. She preserves the original manuscript of the poem and letter with the greatest care, and she some years ago pointed out, as nearly as she could recollect, the exact spot where she had met the Poet, in order that it might be distinguished by an appropriate ornament in the form of a rustic grotto or moss-house. The ornamented twig-work of this rustic monument contains some appropriate devices; and on a tablet in the back there is inscribed a fac-simile of two of the verses of the poem, as it appears in the autograph of the author. The spirit which has dictated the construction and decoration of this grotto is a right one. The lord of a piece of territory may justly value its fertility, its beauty, and its importance in his rent roll; but what character can be attached to a piece of nature's soil, compared to that which the Poet can confer upon it? Burns perhaps entered these grounds without the 'bauld baron's leave,' and was liable at the moment to be snarled away from them by some churlish minister of the baron's pleasure; and now the noblest and the proudest of the land will come to visit them for his sake, and deem that, rich as they are in natural loveliness, and still farther beautified by all the ornaments that wealth can confer, they would have been nothing more than thousands of other river sides, if *he* had not been once there, to behold, to enjoy, and to celebrate them."—PROFESSOR WILSON'S *Land of Burns.*

Miss *Willie* Alexander, as she is familiarly called, is still alive (1840) and has a house in Kilmarnock. A gentleman was one day lately dining at Ballochmyle, when her nephew, the present Laird, asked her to give him the song to be kept as an heir-loom in the family. She replied "Na! na! I will never part with it as long as I live!"

V.

Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,
Where fame and honours lofty shine;
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
Or downward seek the Indian mine;
Give me the cot below the pine,
To tend the flocks, or till the soil,
And every day have joys divine
With the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

["The whole course of the Ayr is fine; but the banks of that river, as it bends to the eastward above Mauchline, are singularly beautiful; and they were frequented, as may be imagined, by our Poet in his solitary walks. Here the muse often visited him. In one of those wanderings he met among the woods a celebrated beauty of the west of Scotland; a lady of whom it is said that the charms of her person corresponded with the character of her mind. This incident gave rise, as might be expected, to a poem, of which an account will be found in the following letter, in which he enclosed it to the object of his inspiration."—CURRIE.

The letter is dated November 18, 1786: it intimates that the song of the Lass of Ballochmyle was nearly taken from real life,—"Though I dare say, Madam," observes the Poet, "you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *reveur* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed in the favourite haunts of my muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills: not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. Such was the scene, and such was the hour—when, in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye. The enclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene."

The fair heroine took no notice either of the letter or its enclosure, and thus appears to have offended the self-love of the Poet, who complains of her silence in his common-place-book.]

The Bonnie Banks of Ayr.

Tune—*Roslin Castle.*

I.

The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild, inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

II.

The autumn mourns her rip'ning corn,
By early winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave—
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

III.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear!
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

IV.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr!

[The history of this affecting lyric is thus related by the author:—"I had been for some time skulking from covert to covert under all the terrors of a jail, as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends: my chest was on the road to Greenock, and I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—

'The gloomy night is gath'ring fast;'

when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition." Professor Walker adds some interesting touches to the Poet's account.—"I requested him to communicate some of his unpublished poems; and he recited his farewell song to the Banks of Ayr, introducing it with a description of the circumstances in which it was composed, more striking than the poem itself. He had left Dr. Laurie's family, after a visit, which he expected to be the last, and on his way home had to cross a wide stretch of solitary moor. His mind was strongly affected by parting for ever with a scene where he had tasted so much elegant and social pleasure; and, depressed by

the contrasted gloom of his prospects, the aspect of nature harmonized with his feelings: it was a lowering and heavy evening in the end of autumn. The wind was up and whistled through the rushes and long spear-grass which bent before it. The clouds were driving across the sky; and cold pelting showers at intervals added discomfort of body to cheerlessness of mind. Under these circumstances, and in this frame, Burns composed his poem."]

Bonnie Dundee.*

Tune—*Bonnie Dundee.*

I.

O, WHARE did ye get that hauver meal bannock?
O silly blind body, O dinna ye see?
I gat it frae a brisk young sodger laddie,
Between Saint Johnston and bonnie Dundee.
O gin I saw the laddie that gae me 't!
Aft has he doudl'd me up on his knee;
May heaven protect my bonnie Scots laddie,
And send him safe hame to his babie and me!

II.

My blessin's upon thy sweet wee lippie,
My blessin's upon thy bonnie e'e bree!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou's aye be dearer and dearer to me!
But I'll big a bower on yon bonnie banks,
Where Tay rins wimplin' by sae clear;
And I'll cleed thee in the tartan sae fine,
And mak thee a man like thy daddie dear.

The Joyful Widower.

Tune—*Maggy Lauder.*

I.

I MARRIED with a scolding wife,
The fourteenth of November;
She made me weary of my life,
By one unruly member.
Long did I bear the heavy yoke,
And many griefs attended;
But, to my comfort be it spoke,
Now, now her life is ended.

II.

We liv'd full one-and-twenty years,
A man and wife together;
At length from me her course she steer'd,
And gone I know not whither:
Would I could guess, I do profess,
I speak, and do not flatter,
Of all the women in the world,
I never could come at her.

III.

Her body is bestowed well,
A handsome grave does hide her;
But sure her soul is not in hell,
The deil could ne'er abide her.
I rather think she is aloft,
And imitating thunder;
For why,—methinks I hear her voice
Tearing the clouds asunder.

[The old Scottish lyric bards loved to sing of the sorrows of wedlock and the raptures of single blessedness. "The Auld Guidman" is an admirable specimen of matrimonial infelicity; it forms a sort of rustic drama, and the surly pair scold verse and verse about. Burns, when he wrote "The Joyful Widower," thought on the strains of his elder brethren, and equalled, if he did not surpass, them. It was first printed in the Musical Museum.]

There was a Wife.

I.

There was a wife wonn'd in Cockpen,
Scroggam;
She brew'd guid ale for gentlemen,
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

* This song was published in the first volume of Johnson's Musical Museum. Burns lays claim to only one stanza of it, as the following laconic epistle which accompanied it will show: "Dear Cleghorn, you will see by the above that I have added a stanza to 'Bonnie Dundee.' If you think it will do, you may set it a-going

Upon a ten string instrument,
And on the Psaltery— R. B.

Mr. Cleghorn,
Farmer. God bless the trade."

The tune to which this song was composed is very old.

Bonnie Dundee is also the name of a Jacobite song, composed on Viscount Dundee who fell at the battle of Killicrankie. A better version of the words above given appears in the Harp of Caledonia, the additions to which are obviously from the pen of Burns: but the reader may judge for himself—

O whare gat ye that bonnie blue bonnet?
O what makes them aye put the question to me?
I gat it frae a bonnie Scots callan,
Atween St. Johnstoun and bonnie Dundee.
O gin I saw the laddie that gae me't!
Aft has he doudled me up on his knee;
May heaven protect my bonnie Scots laddie,
And send him safe hame to his baby and me.

My heart has nae room when I think on my laddie,
His dear rosy haffets bring tears to my e'e—
But, O! he's awa, and I dinna ken whare he's—
Gin we could ance meet we'll ne'er part till we die.
O light be the breezes around him saft blawin'!
And o'er him sweet simmer still blink bonnilie,
And the rich dews o' plenty, around him wide fa'in,
Prevent a' his fears for his baby and me!

My blessings upon that sweet wee lippie!
My blessings upon that bonnie e'e-brie!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou's aye the dearer and dearer to me.
But I'll big a bower on yon green bank sae bonnie,
That's lav'd by the waters o' Tay wimplin clear,
And cleed thee in tartans, my wee smiling Johnnie,
And make thee a man like thy daddie dear.

II.

The gudewife's dochter fell in a fever,
Scroggam;
The priest o' the parish fell in anither,
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

III.

They laid the twa i' the bed thegither,
Scroggam;
That the heat o' the tane might cool the tither,
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

[This song is inserted in the Musical Museum, where it is stated to have been written by Burns, consequently it is here inserted among his other lyrical compositions.]

Come down the Back Stairs.

Tune—*Whistle, and I'll come to you, my Lad.*

CHORUS.

O WHISTLE, and I'll come
To you, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come
To you, my lad:
Tho' father and mither
Should baith gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come
To you, my lad.

COME down the back stairs
When ye come to court me;
Come down the back stairs
When ye come to court me;
Come down the back stairs,
And let naebody see,
And come as ye were na
Coming to me.

[Burns wrote a better version of this lyric for Thomson's Collection; it is founded on the old fragment, but he poured his own feeling and fancy so happily through the whole that not a single line of it remains entire, nor can the new be pronounced free of the language of the older minstrel. The air was composed by John Bruce, an excellent fiddler, who lived in Dumfries.]

There's News, Lasses, News.

I.

There's news, lasses, news,
Gude news I have to tell;
There's a boat fu' o' lads
Come to our town to sell.

CHORUS.

The wean wants a cradle,
An' the cradle wants a cod,
An' I'll no gang to my bed
Until I get a nod.

II.

Father, quo' she, Mither, quo' she,
Do what you can,
I'll no gang to my bed
Till I get a man.
The wean, &c.

III.

I hae as gude a craft rig
As made o' yird and stane;
And waly fa' the ley-crap,
For I maun till'd again.
The wean, &c.

[This humorous song likewise appears in the Musical Museum, where it is stated to have been written for that work by Burns.]

I'm o'er young to Marry yet.

Tune—*I'm o'er young to marry yet.*

I.

I AM my mammy's ae bairn,
Wi' unco folk I weary, Sir;
And lying in a man's bed,
I'm fley'd wad mak me eerie, Sir.
I'm o'er young to marry yet;
I'm o'er young to marry yet;
I'm o'er young—'twad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammy yet.

II.

My mammy coft me a new gown,
The kirk maun hae the gracing o't;
Were I to lie wi' you, kind Sir,
I'm fear'd ye'd spoil the lacing o't.

III.

Hallowmas is come and gane,
The nights are lang in winter, Sir;
An' you an' I, in ae bed,
In trouth I dare na venture, Sir.

IV.

Fu' loud and shrill the frosty wind,
Blaws thro' the leafless timmer, Sir;
But if ye come this gate again,
I'll aulder be gin simmer, Sir.
I'm o'er young to marry yet;
I'm o'er young to marry yet;
I'm o'er young—'twad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammy yet.

The title of this song and a part of the chorus are old: the rest is by Burns: of the old words, snatches still remain on men's memories:—

"My mither coft me a new gown,
The kirk maun hae the gracing o't;
Were I to meet wi' you, kind sir,
I'm rad I'd spoil the lacing o't.

I'm owre young, I'm owre young,
I'm far owre young to marry yet;
I'm sae young t'wad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammy yet.

Damon and Sylvia.

Tune—*The tither morn, as I forlorn.*

I.

Yon wand'ring rill, that marks the hill,
And glances o'er the brae, Sir,
Slides by a bower where mony a flower,
Sheds fragrance on the day, Sir.

II.

There Damon lay, with Sylvia gay,
To love they thought nae crime, Sir;
The wild-birds sang, the echoes rang,
While Damon's heart beat time, Sir.

The Birks of Aberfeldy.

Tune—*The Birks of Aberfeldy.*

CHORUS.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonnie lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Aberfeldy?

I.

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

II.

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blithely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

III.

The braes ascend, like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

IV.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy.

V.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonnie lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Aberfeldy?

Burns says he wrote this song while standing under the Falls of Aberfeldy, near Moness, in Perthshire, in September, 1787. He was on his way to Inverness. The air is very old and very sprightly.

"Every reader," says Professor Walker, "must have observed with what strokes of delicate and original description the songs of Burns are embellished. Thus in the present song we have this fine picture:—

White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And, rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy."

Many of the songs of Burns had their origin in the snatches of verse and fragments of choruses current during his day in Scotland. The forerunner of this sweet song is as follows:—

"Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonnie lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Abergeldie?
Ye shall get a gown o' silk,
A gown o' silk, a gown o' silk;
Ye shall get a gown o' silk,
And coat o' calimanco.

"Na, kind sir, I dare na gang,
I dare na gang, I dare na gang;
Na, kind sir, I dare na gang—
My minnie she'll be angry.
Sair, sair wad she flyte,
Wad she flyte, wad she flyte;
Sair, sair wad she flyte,
And sair wad she ban me."

Abergeldy is an estate in Aberdeen-shire, formerly remarkable for the production of birches, but now planted (by its proprietor, Mr. Gordon, of Abergeldy) with oaks and other more valuable timber.

Macpherson's Farewell.

Tune—*M'Pherson's Rant.*

I.

Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

II.

Oh! what is death but parting breath?—
On mony a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!

III.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword!
And there's no a man in all Scotland
But I'll brave him at a word.

IV.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart,
And not avenged be.

V.

Now farewell light—thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

["Macpherson's Lament," says Sir Walter Scott, "was a well-known song many years before the Ayr-shire Bard wrote these additional verses, which constitute its principal merit. This noted freebooter was executed at Inverness about the beginning of the last century. When he came to the fatal tree, he played the tune to which he has bequeathed his name, upon a favourite violin: and, holding up the instrument, he offered it to any one of his clan who would undertake to play the tune over his body at the lyke-wake. As none answered, he dashed it to pieces on the executioner's head, and flung himself from the ladder." *

"Sir Walter Scott has said that this noted freebooter was executed at Inverness, but a writer in the New Monthly Magazine, Vol. 1. p. 142, corrects this error. Macpherson was executed at Banff, early on Friday morning, November 16th, in the year 1700, several hours before the time specified in the sentence for his execution. It is said that his execution was hurried on by the Magistrates, and that they also caused the messenger intrusted with the reprieve for this notorious criminal to be stopped by the way, in consequence of which acts of injustice, it is alleged, the town of Banff was deprived of the power of trying and executing malefactors.

"The following is said to be the *real* composition of the unfortunate Macpherson himself when in jail, waiting the severe sentence of the law, and owes its preservation to the following cause:—A young woman of respectable parents, with whom he had lived during his unsettled life, had formed for him an inseparable attachment, so that in his dungeon she was known to love him. She learned her lover's farewell, which she called 'the remains of her Jamie,' while in prison, and after having witnessed his final exit on an inglorious gallows, she returned to her wandering life, which she led ever after, and sung, wherever she went, the following song, as composed by Macpherson:—

'I've spent my time in rioting,
Debauch'd my health and strength,
I squander'd fast as pillage came,
And fell to shame at length.

But dantinly and wantonly,
And rantinly I'll gae,
I'll play a tune, and dance it roun',
Below the gallows-tree.

'To hang upon the gallows-tree,
Accurs'd, disgraceful, death!
Like a vile dog hung up to be,
And stifled in my breath!

'My father was a gentleman
Of fame and lineage high;
Oh! mother, would you ne'er had borne
A wretch so doom'd to die.

'The laird o' Grant, with power aboon
The royal majesty,
He pled fu' well for Peter Brown,
But let Macpherson die.

'But Braco Duff, in rage enough,
He first laid hands on me;
If death did not arrest my course,
Avenged I should be.

'But vengeance I did never wreak
When power was in my hand,
And you, my friends, no vengeance seek,
Obey my last command.

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* The Banff tradition relates that Macpherson was chief of a branch of the clan Chattan: a freebooter by choice or chance, and of unequalled strength and courage. He imagined, as he descended with his followers from the mountains, that he was but asserting the independence of his wild tribe, and believed, when he harried the vales, that he was taking a lawful prey. Macduff, of Braco, was not of this opinion: he resisted the spoliation of his lands, and, in several encounters with Macpherson, ascertained that stratagem was more likely to be successful than open force. Having heard that the freebooter was at the fair of Keith, with only one companion, he instantly entered the town, singled him out, and attacked him in the market-place. Macpherson fought with the most desperate courage—several fell by his hand, and he made his way through all opposition to the churchyard, but, stumbling as he defended himself, he was overpowered and captured, conveyed to Banff, and condemned to die. His execution was attended by those romantic circumstances related by Scott; his body was buried on the Gallow-hill, beneath the gallows-tree—The sword and shield of Macpherson are deposited in the Earl of Fife's armoury at Duff-house, near Banff, and are in a state of tolerable preservation, though it is evident they had undergone much tear and wear while in the hands of their original owner. The sword is double-handed, six feet in length, and waved or scalloped along the edge of the blade, which is about the breadth of a common scythe. The shield is composed of wood, bull's-hide, and brass nails, with the latter of which it is curiously ornamented. Such a ponderous weapon required a powerful man—and such, indeed, he was; for, when his grave was opened some years ago, his bones exceeded in strength those common to nature. The shield is hacked and dinted in several places; one or two bullets, too, have passed through the thick studding and the massive wood, and are lodged in the outside coating of leather. They are viewed with much interest by the curious.

'Forgive the man whose rage could seek
Macpherson's worthless life,
When I am gone, be it ne'er said
My legacy was strife.

'And ye that blame with cruel scorn
The wand'ring gipsy's ways;
Oh! think, if homeless, houseless born,
Ye could spend better days.

'If all the wealth on land and sea
Within my power was laid,
I'd give it all this hour to be
On the soldier's dying bed.

'I've led a life o' meikle strife,
Sweet peace ne'er smil'd on me;
It grieves me sair that I maun gae
An' nae avenged be.

But dantinly and wantonly,
And rantinly I'll gae,
I'll play a tune, and dance it roun',
Below the gallows-tree.'

"The last four lines of another recited copy seem to be at variance with the above, for in them he is said to have had a wife and bairns; but, if we take to account the unsettled ways of the gipsy tribe to which Macpherson belonged, and that they were allowed the same indulgence as the patriarchs of old—polygamy, or a plurality of wives and concubines—the preceding will be, as a painter would say, quite in keeping.

'Farewell my comrades ane an' a',
Farewell my wife an' bairns;
Some small repentance in my heart,
The *fiddle's* in my arms.
Sae wantonly, &c.'

"The fiddle, which was then in his arms, and had been his solace in many a gloomy hour, was offered to several of the bystanders, but, none having courage to accept of the proffered boon, he dashed it to pieces, that it might perish with himself, and so went singing into eternity. His body afterwards found a resting-place beneath the gallows-tree on which he paid the forfeit of his life."

We shall now conclude this interesting notice of Macpherson, by giving the account we have of him in the New Monthly Magazine. "James Macpherson was born of a beautiful gipsy, who, at a great wedding, attracted the notice of a half-intoxicated Highland gentleman. He acknowledged the child, and had him reared in his house, until he lost his life in bravely pursuing a hostile clan, to recover a herd of cattle taken from Badenoch. The gipsy woman, hearing of this disaster, in her rambles the following summer, came and took away her boy; but she often returned with him, to wait upon his relations and clansmen, who never failed to clothe him well, besides giving money to his mother. He grew up to beauty, strength, and stature, rarely equalled. His sword is still preserved at Duff House, a residence of the Earl of Fife, and few men of our day could carry it, far less wield it as a weapon of war; and if it must be owned that his prowess was debased by the exploits of a free-booter, it is certain no act of cruelty, no robbery of the widow, the fatherless, or the distressed, and no murder, were ever perpetrated under his command. He often gave the spoils of the rich to relieve the poor; and all his tribe were restrained from many atrocities and rapine by the awe of his mighty arm. Indeed, it is said that a dispute with an aspiring and savage man of his tribe, who wished to rob a gentleman's house while his wife and two children lay on the bier for interment, was the cause of his being betrayed to the vengeance of the law. The Magistrates of Aberdeen were exasperated at Macpherson's escape, and bribed a girl in that city to allure and deliver him into their hands. There is a platform before the jail, at the top of a stair, and a door below. When Macpherson's capture was made known to his comrades by the frantic girl, who had been so credulous as to believe the magistrates only wanted to hear the wonderful performer on the violin, his cousin, Donald Macpherson, a gentleman of Herculean powers, did not disdain to come from Badenoch, and to join a gipsy, Peter Brown, in liberating the prisoner. On a market-day they brought several assistants; and swift horses were stationed at a convenient distance. Donald Macpherson and Peter Brown forced the jail; and, while Peter Brown went to help the heavily-fettered James Macpherson in moving away, Donald Macpherson guarded the jail-door with a drawn sword. Many persons assembled at the market had experienced James Macpherson's humanity, or had shared his bounty; and they crowded round the jail as in mere curiosity, but, in fact, to obstruct the civil authorities in their attempts to prevent a rescue. A butcher, however, was resolved to detain Macpherson, expecting a large recompense from the magistrates: he sprung up the stairs, and leaped from the platform upon Donald Macpherson, whom he dashed to the ground by the force and weight of his body. Donald Macpherson soon recovered, to make a desperate resistance; and the combatants tore off each other's clothes. The butcher got a glimpse of his dog upon the platform, and called him to his aid; but Macpherson, with admirable presence of mind, snatched up his own plaid, which lay near, and threw it over the butcher, thus misleading the instinct of his canine adversary. The dog darted with fury upon the plaid, and terribly lacerated his master's thigh. In the meantime, James Macpherson had been carried out by Peter Brown, and was soon joined by Donald Macpherson, who was quickly covered by some friendly spectator with a hat and great coat. The magistrates ordered webs from the shops to be drawn across the Gallowgate; but Donald Macpherson cut them asunder with his

sword, and James, the late prisoner, got off on horseback. He was, some time after, betrayed by a man of his own tribe; and was the last person executed at Banff, previous to the abolition of hereditable jurisdiction. He was an admirable performer on the violin; and his talent for composition is still evidenced by Macpherson's Rant, and Macpherson's Pibroch. He performed these tunes at the foot of the fatal tree; and then asked if he had any friend in the crowd to whom a last gift of this instrument would be acceptable. No man had hardihood to claim friendship with a delinquent, in whose crimes the acknowledgment might implicate an avowed acquaintance. As no friend came forward, Macpherson said the companion of so many gloomy hours should perish with him; and, breaking the violin over his knee, he threw away the fragments. Donald Macpherson picked up the neck of the violin, which to this day is preserved, as a valuable memento, by the family of Cluny, chieftain of the Macphersons."]

Braw Lads of Galla Water.

Tune—*Galla Water.*

CHORUS.

BRAW, braw lads of Galla Water;
O braw lads of Galla Water:
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

I.

SAE fair her hair, sae brent her brow,
Sae bonny blue her een, my dearie;
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou',
The mair I kiss she's aye my dearie.

II.

O'er yon bank and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather;
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

III.

Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost a silken snood,
That cost her mony a blirt and bleary.

Braw, braw lads of Galla Water;
O braw lads of Galla Water:
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

[Perhaps the air of this song is the very sweetest of all the fine airs of Caledonia. It charmed Haydn so much that he wrote under it in the best English he could muster, "This one Dr. Haydn favourite song." The air is very old, nor are some of the verses modern: these are the most ancient:—

"Braw, braw lads of Galla Water,
Braw, braw lads of Galla water;
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love through the water.

"O'er yon bank and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather,
I'll kilt my coat aboon my knee,
And follow my love through the water."

Burns admired the air so much that he wrote, in 1793, another version of the song which will be found in his correspondence with Thomson: less of the old strain mingles with his second effort. The naïvetè of the first verse of the first hasty version will always make it a favourite.]

Stay my Charmer.

Tune—*An Gille dubh ciar dhubh.*

I.

STAY, my charmer, can you leave me?
Cruel, cruel to deceive me!
Well you know how much you grieve me;
Cruel charmer, can you go?
Cruel charmer, can you go?

II.

By my love so ill requited;
By the faith you fondly plighted;
By the pangs of lovers slighted;
Do not, do not leave me so!
Do not, do not leave me so!

[The air to which these verses were composed is called "The black-haired lad:" it is simple and affecting. Burns picked it up in the north; and, touched by the slight which a Highland damsel put on him by quitting his side when he was discoursing on tender things, he embodied his feelings in these fine verses.]

Strathallan's Lament.*

I.

THICKEST night, o'erhang my † dwelling!
Howling tempests, o'er me rave!
Turbid ‡ torrents, wintry § swelling,
Still surround my || lonely cave!

* Viscount Strathallan, whom these verses commemorate, was James Drummond, who escaped with difficulty from the field of Culloden, where his father fell, and died abroad, an exile.—"The air," says the Poet, "is the composition of one of the worthiest and best-hearted men living—Allan Masterton, schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause. To tell the truth, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of *vive la bagatelle.*"

† VAR. Darkness surround. ‡ Sweeping.
§ Turbid. || Roaring by. POET'S MS.

II.

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
Suit not my distracted mind.

III.

In the cause of right engaged,
Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly waged,
But the heavens denied success.

IV.

[Farewell, fleeting, fickle treasure,
'Tween Misfortune and Folly shar'd!
Farewell Peace, and farewell Pleasure!
Farewell, flattering man's regard!]

V.

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,*
Not a hope that dare attend,†
The wide world is all before us—‡
But a world without a friend!

[The additional verse is from the Poet's own manuscript.]

My Hoggie.

Tune—*What will I do gin my Hoggie die?*

WHAT will I do gin my hoggie die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And vow but I was vogie!

The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,
Me and my faithfu' doggie;
We heard nought but the roaring linn,
Amang the braes sae scroggie;

But the houlet cry'd frae the castle wa',
The blitter frae the boggie,
The tod reply'd upon the hill,
I trembl'd for my hoggie.

When day did daw, and cocks did craw,
The morning it was foggie;
An' unco tyke lap o'er the dyke,
And maist has kill'd my hoggie.

[Burns has refrained from claiming this song—it is his, however, beyond all question; he communicated it to Johnson with the following remarks:—"Dr. Walker, who was Minister at Moffat in 1772, and is now (1791) Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, told me the following anecdote concerning this air.—He said that some gentlemen, riding a few years ago through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Moss Platt; when they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at her door, was singing.—All she could tell concerning it was that she was taught it when a child, and it was called, 'What will I do gin my hoggie die.' No person, except a few females at Moss Platt, knew this fine old tune; which, in all probability, would have been lost, had not one of the gentlemen, who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down."]

* VAR. Me. † Nor dare my fate a hope attend.
‡ Me.—Poet's MS.

Her Daddie Forbad.

Tune—*Jumpin' John.*

I.

HER daddie forbad, her minnie forbad;
Forbidden she wadna be:
She wadna trow't the browst she brew'd
Wad taste sae bitterlie.

The lang lad they ca' Jumpin' John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie, &c.

II.

A cow and a cauf, a yowe and a hauf,
And thretty guid shillin's and three;
A vera gude tocher, a cotter-man's dochter,
The lass with the bonnie black e'e.

The lang lad they ca' Jumpin' John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie, &c.

[Part of these verses are from the pen of Burns, and part from a humorous old ballad of the olden day, of which some fragments still remain among the curious—

"Jumpin' John o' the green
He has tint his dearie,
Sour milk carries nae cream,
Hey, come blirt, come blearie!"

More verses might be quoted, but they are more lively than delicate—an imperfection common to our early songs. Our simple ancestors made use of expressions and allusions then reckoned perfectly innocent; but the meaning has been pronounced indecorous by their more scrupulous descendants.

The air to which the words are adapted has a strong affinity to the well-known tune called Lillibulero, composed, it is said, by Henry Purcell: but the name Lillibulero, at least, was popular before the days of that eminent composer.—CUNNINGHAM.]

Up in the Morning Early.

CHORUS.

UP in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I m sure it's winter fairly.

I.

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

II.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn—
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I'm sure its winter fairly.

["The chorus of this song," observes Burns, "is old; the two stanzas are mine." The following have since been added:—

" O spring-time is a pleasant time,
When green the grass is growing;
And summer it is sweeter still,
When sun-warm streams are flowing.

" But winter it is thrice as sweet,
When frosts bite sharp and sairly;
Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early.

" The thrush sits chittering on the thorn;
The sparrow dines but sparely,
The crow longs for the time o' corn—
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

" The plough stands frozen in the fur,
And down the snow comes rarely;
Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early."

The air is ancient, and well known in England; it was a great favourite with Mary Stuart, Queen of William III.; and on one occasion she nettled Purcell by preferring it to his most scientific compositions. Probably the following may have been the song of which that of Burns is a brief *rifacciamento*:—

' Cauld blaws the wind frae north to south,
And drift is driving sairly;
The sheep are couring i' the cleugh,
O sirs! its winter fairly.
Now up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
I'd rather gang supperless to my bed,
Than rise in the morning early.

' Rude rairs the blast amang the woods,
The branches tirlin barely;
Amang the chimney-taps it thuds,
And frost is nippin sairly.
Now up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
To sit a' the night I'd rather agree,
Than rise in the morning early.

' The sun peeps o'er the southlan' hill,
Like onie timorous carlie;
Just blinks a wee, then sinks again,
And that we find severely.
Now up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When snaw blaws into the chimley cheek,
Wha'd rise in the morning early?

' Nae linties lilt on hedge or bush,
Poor things, they suffer sairly;
In cauldrife quarters a' the night,
A' day they feed but sparely.
Now up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
Nae fate can be waur, in winter time,
Than rise in the morning early.

' A cosey house, and cantie wife,
Keeps aye a body cheerly;
And pantry stow'd wi' meal and mau',
It answers unco rarely.
But up in the morning, na, na, na,
Up in the morning early;
The gowans maun glent on bank and brae,
When I rise in the morning early.' "

THE
Young Highland Rover.

Tune—*Morag*.

I.

Loud blaw the frosty breezes,
The snaw the mountains cover;
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young Highland Rover
Far wanders nations over.
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
May Heaven be his warden;
Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon!

II.

The trees now naked groaning,
Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,
The birdies dowie moaning,
Shall a' be blithely singing,
And every flower be springing.
Sae I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
When by his mighty warden
My youth's return'd to fair Strathspey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon.

[The young Highland Rover is supposed to be the young Chevalier, Prince Charles Edward.—Currie.

Jacobitism was long worn as a sort of costume by families in the north; the ladies loved the white rose, and it is not improbable that her Grace the Duchess encouraged the Bard to wish Prince Charles back in Strathspey, and bonnie Castle-Gordon. Morag, the name

of the air, corresponds with the lowland Marion. Songs, in which the white rose of Jacobitism flourishes, are numerous. Most of them have been collected into volumes, by the Ettrick Shepherd; they are of various merit; some, full of hope and heroics—others breathe vexation and anger, and many show deep sorrow—more particularly those which related to the sad fortunes of the exiled prince, and his suffering companions.—CUNNINGHAM.]

Hey, the Dusty Miller.

Tune—*The Dusty Miller.*

I.

HEY, the dusty miller,
And his dusty coat;
He will win a shilling,
Or he spend a groat.
Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss
I got frae the miller

II.

Hey, the dusty miller,
And his dusty sack;
Leeze me on the calling
Fills the dusty peck.
Fills the dusty peck,
Brings the dusty siller;
I wad gie my coatie
For the dusty miller.

[The present strain was modified for the Museum by Burns, and is a very happy specimen of his skill and taste in emendation. Other verses may be found in our collections:—

"Hey, the merry miller!
As the wheel rins roun',
And the clapper claps,
My heart gies a stoun';
Water grinds the corn,
Water wins the siller;
When the dam is dry,
I daute wi' the miller."

The air is cheerful, like the words, and was in other days played as a single hornpipe in the Scottish dancing schools.]

Bonnie Peg.*

I.

As I came in by our gate end,
As day was waxin' weary,
O wha came tripping down the street,
But bonnie Peg, my dearie!

II.

Her air sae sweet, and shape complete,
Wi' nae proportion wanting,
The Queen of Love did never move
Wi' motion mair enchanting.

III.

Wi' linked hands, we took the sands
Adown yon winding river;
And, oh! that hour and broomy bow'r,
Can I forget it ever?—

There was a Lass.

Tune—*Duncan Davison.*

I.

THERE was a lass, they ca'd her Meg,
And she held o'er the moors to spin;
There was a lad that follow'd her,
They ca'd him Duncan Davison.
The moor was driegh, and Meg was skiegh,
Her favour Duncan could na win;
For wi' the roke she wad him knock,
And aye she shook the temper-pin.

II.

As o'er the moor they lightly foor,
A burn was clear, a glen was green,
Upon the banks they eas'd their shanks,
And aye she set the wheel between:
But Duncan swore a haly aith,
That Meg should be a bride the morn,
Then Meg took up her spinnin' graith,
And flang them a' out o'er the burn.

III.

We'll big a house—a wee, wee house,
And we will live like king and queen,
Sae blythe and merry we will be
When ye set by the wheel at e'en.
A man may drink and no be drunk;
A man may fight and no be slain;
A man may kiss a bonnie lass,
And aye be welcome back again.

[The old song of this name, sung to the tune of "You'll aye be welcome back again," is much inferior to the Duncan Davison of Burns in wit and delicacy. The Poet was delighted with this lively old air, and, brooding over the old words, conceived the present strain, which is full of the graphic spirit of other days.]

Shelah O'Neil.

WHEN first I began for to sigh and to woo her,
Of many fine things I did say a great deal,
But, above all the rest, that which pleas'd her the best,
Was, Oh! will you marry me, Shelah O'Neil?

* First published in the Edinburgh Magazine for 1818.

My point I soon carried, for straight we were married,
Then the weight of my burden I soon 'gan to feel,—
For she scolded, she fisted, O then I enlisted,
Left Ireland, and whiskey, and Shelah O'Neil.

Then tir'd and dull-hearted, O then I deserted,
And fled into regions far distant from home,
To Frederick's army, where none e'er could harm me,
Save Shelah herself in the shape of a bomb.
I fought every battle, where cannons did rattle,
Felt sharp shot, alas! and the sharp-pointed steel;
But, in all my wars round, thank my stars, I ne'er found
Ought so sharp as the tongue of curs'd Shelah O'Neil.

Theniel Menzie's bonnie Mary.

Tune—*The Ruffian's Rant.*

I.

In coming by the brig o' Dye,
At Darlet we a blink did tarry;
As day was dawin in the sky,
We drank a health to bonnie Mary.

Theniel Menzie's bonnie Mary,
Theniel Menzie's bonnie Mary;
Charlie Gregor tint his plaidie,
Kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.

II.

Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,
Her haffet locks as brown's a berry;
And aye, they dimpl't wi' a smile,
The rosy cheeks o' bonnie Mary.

III.

We lap and danc'd the lee lang day,
Till piper lads were wae an' weary;
But Charlie gat the spring to pay,
For kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary,

Theniel Menzie's bonnie Mary,
Theniel Menzie's bonnie Mary;
Charlie Gregor tint his plaidie,
Kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.

[This song seems to have been written by Burns, during his first Highland tour, when he danced among the merry lasses of the north all night to the air of "Bab at the Bowster," and went out with a bowl of punch between his hands in the morning, to drink a welcome to the god of day, rising over the peak of Ben-Lomond. Who "Theniel Menzie's bonnie Mary" was, it is now, perhaps, vain to inquire; that she was a lass of spirit, the disaster that befel the plaid of Charlie Gregor sufficiently intimates. The Poet composed other verses to the same air: it is the well-known melody of that exquisite song, "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch."

The following is the old version of this song:—

In Scotland braid and far awa',
Where lasses painted, busk sae braw,
A bonnier lass I never saw
Than Thenie Menzie's bonny Mary.

CHORUS.

Thenie Menzie's bonny Mary,
Thenie Menzie's bonny Mary;
A' the warld would I gie
For a kiss o' Thenie's bonny Mary.

The miser's joy and gowden bliss
I never kent, nor sought to guess;
I'm rich when I hae ta'en a kiss
O' Thenie Menzie's bonny Mary.

Some dozen'd loons sit douf and caul',
And they hae liv'd till they've grown aul',
Scarce ever kent they had a saul,
Till they saw Thenie's bonny Mary.

Her dimply chin and rosy cheeks,
Her milk-white hands sae saft and sleek,
And twa bricht een that seem to speak,
Hae tied my heart to Thenie's Mary.

Thenie Menzie's bonny Mary,
Thenie Menzie's bonny Mary;
A' the warld would I gie
For a kiss o' Thenie's bonny Mary.]

The Banks of the Devon.

Tune—*Bhannerach dhon na chri.*

I.

How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon,
With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair!
But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud, on the braes of the Ayr.
Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn, as it bathes in the dew!
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew.

II.

O spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing, as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile, that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!
Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England, triumphant, display her proud rose:
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys,
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

"These verses," says Burns, in his notes in the Musical Museum, "were composed on a charming girl—Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James Mackittrick Adair, physician. She is sister to my worthy friend, Gavin Hamilton, of Mauchline, and was born on the banks of the Ayr; but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Harvieston, in Clackmannan-shire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon. I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for this work." The Poet, as has been intimated in his Life, was more than an admirer of this young lady; but she refused to be won by the charms of verse, having already set her heart upon a more favoured lover.

Weary Fa' you, Duncan Gray.

Tune—*Duncan Gray.*

I.

Weary fa' you, Duncan Gray—
Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
Wae gae by you, Duncan Gray—
Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
When a' the lave gae to their play,
Then I maun sit the lee lang day,
And jog the cradle wi' my tae,
And a' for the girdin o't.

II.

Bonnie was the Lammas moon—
Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
Glowrin' a' the hills aboon—
Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
The girdin brak, the beast cam down,
I tint my curch, and baith my shoon;
Ah! Duncan, ye're an unco loon—
Wae on the bad girdin o't!

III.

But, Duncan, gin ye'll keep your aith,
Ha, ha, the girdin o't!—
Ise bless you wi' my hindmost breath—
Ha, ha, the girdin o't!
Duncan, gin ye'll keep your aith—
The beast again can bear us baith,
And auld Mess John will mend the skaith,
And clout the bad girdin o't.*

[The elder "Duncan Gray," out of which the present song was manufactured by Burns, was composed by a Glasgow carman, from whose whistling it was noted down. The Poet says:—"Duncan Gray is that kind of light horse-gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature." This song appeared in the Musical Museum; a second version was afterwards written for Thomson, which will be found in the Poet's correspondence with that gentleman.]

The Ploughman.

Tune—*Up wi' the Ploughman.*

I.

The ploughman he's a bonnie lad,
His mind is ever true, jo;
His garters knit below his knee,
His bonnet it is blue, jo.

Then up wi' my ploughman lad,
And hey my merry ploughman!
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman.

* The following is the original version of Duncan Gray.—

As I came in by Aberdeen,
Hech hey the girdin o't:
I met a lassie clad in green,
And that's the lang girdin o't;
The brawest lass that e'er was seen
She might compete wi' Venus queen,
And by the glancin' o' her e'en,
I kent she knew the girdin o't.

My bonny lass, I then did say,
Hech hey the girdin o't:
How far hae ye to gang this way,
And that's the lang girdin o't?
Quickly then she answered me,
Hech hey the girdin o't;
I'm gaen three miles out ower the lea.
And that's the lang girdin o't.

Gin ye will gang alang wi' me,
Hech hey the girdin o't;
Sae weel's I like your companie,
And that's the lang girdin o't?
I said, wi' her I'd walk a mile,
And then I jumped ower a stile,
Gin she would tarry here awhile,
And dance wi' me the girdin o't.

We baith sat down upon the green,
Hech hey, the girdin o't;
Where we were neither heard nor seen,
And that's the lang girdin o't.
There I play'd her Duncan Gray,
Out ower the hills and far away;
The lassie smil'd on me right gay,
Then danc'd wi' me the girdin o't.

But when will we twa meet again?
Hech hey the girdin o't;
For o' your company I'm fain,
And that's the lang girdin o't.
Gin ye will play me Duncan Gray,
Out ower the hills and far away,
I will adore you night and day,
And that's the lang girdin o't.

There are two other stanzas, which, in deference to the taste of the age, we cannot give; they are like the majority of the songs of the olden time. The above is valuable only as illustrating that freedom of manners and broad humour which prevailed among our ancestors. The version of Burns now entirely supersedes the original.

II.

My ploughman he comes hame at e'en,
He's aften wat and weary;
Cast off the wat, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my dearie!

III.

I will wash my ploughman's hose,
And I will dress his o'erlay;
I will mak my ploughman's bed,
And cheer him late and early.

IV.

I hae been east, I hae been west,
I hae been at Saint Johnston;
The bonniest sight that e'er I saw
Was the ploughman laddie dancin'.

V.

Snaw-white stockins on his legs,
And siller buckles glancin';
A guid blue bonnet on his head—
And O, but he was handsome!

VI.

Commend me to the barn-yard,
And the corn-mou, man;
I never gat my coggie fou,
Till I met wi the ploughman.
Then up wi' my ploughman lad,
And hey my merry ploughman!
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman.

The old words of this song are in Herd's collection; some of which have been adapted by Burns:—

"The ploughman he's a bonnie lad,
And a' his wark's at leisure;
And when that he comes home at e'en
He kisses me wi' pleasure.

Up wi't now, my ploughman lad,
Up wi't now, my ploughman:
Of a' the lads that I do see,
Commend me to the ploughman.

Now the blooming spring comes on,
He taks his yoking early,
And whistling o'er the furrow'd land,
He goes to fallow clearly.

When my ploughman comes hame at e'en,
He's aften wet an' weary;
Cast aff the wet, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my deary.

I will wash my ploughman's hose,
And I will wash his o'erlay:
And I will make my ploughman's bed,
And cheer him late and early.

Plough you hill, and plough you dale,
And plough you faugh and fallow;
Wha winna drink the ploughman's health
He's but a dirty fallow."

Merry but, and merry ben,
Merry is my ploughman;
Of a' the lads that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman."

Landlady, count the Lawin.

Tune—*Hey Tutti, Taiti.*

I.

Landlady, count the lawin,
The day is near the dawin;
Ye're a' blind drunk, boys,
And I'm but jolly fou.
Hey tutti, taiti,
How tutti, taiti—
Wha's fou now?

II.

Cog an' ye were aye fou,
Cog an' ye were aye fou,
I wad sit and sing to you,
If ye were aye fou.

III.

Weel may ye a' be!
Ill may we never see!
God bless the king, boys,
And the companie!
Hey tutti, taiti,
How tutti, taiti—
Wha's fou now?

Two of the verses of this song are by Burns: the concluding stanza is taken from a political song composed when Charles XII. of Sweden threatened to unite with Russia, repair to England, and restore the line of the Stuarts. Two verses of this old strain are as follow:

"Here's to the king of Swede!
May fresh laurels crown his head;
Foul fall every sneaking blade,
That winna do't again.

When you hear the pipe soun's,
Tuttie tattie to the drums,
Up your swords and down your guns,
And at the loons again."

A far nobler strain, called "Hey now the day daues," is well known to every lover of Scottish song: it is quoted by Gawin Douglas in his 13th prologue to the Scottish Virgil, and is mentioned by Dunbar:—

"Hey now the day dauis,
The jollie cock crauis,
Now shrouds the shauis,
Throw nature anone.

The thissle-cock cryis
On lovers wha lyis,
Now skaillis the skyis,
The night is nigh gone."

But the old and true reading of the song, which bears the name, and to which Burns is indebted for part of the chorus and many of the ideas, is the following:—

"Hey tutti, taittie,
Hey talarettie,
Hey my bonnie Mallie,
She's aye roarin' fou'.

I will drink to you, love,
Bot nae to fill you fou, love,
O had your tongue my bonny thing,—
I'll kiss my bonny doe, &c."

Ye hae Lien Wrang, Lassie.

CHORUS.

YE hae lien a' wrang, lassie,
Ye've lien a' wrang;
Ye've lien in an unco bed,
And wi' a fremit man.

I.

YOUR rosy cheeks are turn'd sae wan,
Ye're greener than the grass, lassie;
Your coatie's shorter by a span,
Yet ne'er an inch the less, lassie.

II.

O, lassie, ye hae play'd the fool,
And ye will feel the scorn, lassie;
For aye the brose ye sup at e'en,
Ye bock them ere the morn, lassie.

III.

O ance ye danc'd upon the knowes,
And through the wood ye sang, lassie,
But in the herrying o' a bee byke,
I fear ye've got a stang, lassie.
Ye hae lien a' wrang, lassie,
Ye've lien a' wrang,
Ye've lien in an unco bed,
And wi' a fremit man.

Raving Winds around her blowing.

Tune—*Macgregor of Ruara's Lament.*

I.

RAVING winds around her blowing,
Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella stray'd deploring:—
"Farewell hours that late did measure
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
Hail thou gloomy night of sorrow,
Cheerless night, that knows no morrow!

II.

"O'er the past too fondly wandering,
On the hopeless future pondering;
Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to misery most distressing,
O how gladly I'd resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!"

"I composed these verses," says Burns, "on Miss Isabella M'Leod of Rasay, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon." (He died suddenly of a broken heart, in the year 1786.) "Macgregor of Ruara's Lament" is a Gaelic melody of great beauty, force, and tenderness. It has been attempted in English:—

"From the chase on the mountain
As I was returning,
By the side of a fountain
Malvina sat mourning;
To the winds that loud whistled
She told her sad story,
And the valleys re-echoed—
Macgregor a ruadhri!

Like a flash of red lightning
O'er the heath came Macara,
More fleet than the roebuck
On lofty Benlara;
O, where is Macgregor?
Say, where does he hover?
Thou son of bold Calmar,
Why tarries my lover?"

Women's Minds.

Tune—"*For a' that.*"

I.

THOUGH women's minds like winter winds
May shift and turn, and a' that,
The noblest breast adores them maist,
A consequence I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that,
The bonnie lass that I lo'e best
She'll be my ain for a' that.

II.

Great love I bear to all the fair
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still,
A mortal sin to thraw that.

III.

But there is ane aboon the lave,
Has wit, and sense, and a' that;
A bonnie lass, I like her best,
And wha a crime dare ca' that?*

[There are two other verses the same as the Bard's song in the Jolly Beggars. The second verse, which we have repeated here, is also included in that celebrated Cantata. The rest are new, and in the hand-writing of the Poet.]

How long and dreary is the Night.

To a Gaelic Air.

I.

How lang and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie!

* [This verse is omitted in the Musical Museum.]

I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.

II.

When I think on the happy days
I spent wi' you, my dearie,
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie!
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie!

III.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary!
It was na sae ye glinted by
When I was wi' my dearie.
It was na sae ye glinted by
When I was wi' my dearie.

["Burns, during his excursions in the Highlands, threw himself in the way of the district musicians, and sought the acquaintance of all who were skilful in the native music. In this way he picked up many fine airs; and it has been remarked that he always selected the finest set of the air. Though not a musician himself, and scarcely a singer, he had a natural tact and taste which served him, instead of scientific acquirements, in judging of Scottish melodies. The air of this affecting song is true Highland: the Poet, as will be found, resumed the subject, and improved upon the first version." (See his Correspondence with Thomson, Oct. 19th, 1794.)—CUNNINGHAM.]

Musing on the Roaring Ocean.

Tune—*Druimion dubh.*

I.

MUSING on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me;
Wearying Heaven in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be.

II.

Hope and fear's alternate billow
Yielding, late to nature's law,
Whisp'ring spirits round my pillow
Talk of him that's far awa.

III.

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear.

IV.

Gentle night, do thou befriend me;
Downy sleep, the curtain draw;
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that's far awa!

Burns composed these verses out of compliment to Mrs. M'Lauchlan, whose husband was an officer, at that period serving in the East Indies.

Blithe was She.

Tune—*Andrew and his Cutty Gun.*

CHORUS.

BLITHE, blithe, and merry was she,
Blithe was she but and ben:
Blithe by the banks of Ern,
And blithe in Glenturit glen.

I.

BY Auchtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.

II.

Her looks were like a flow'r in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She tripped by the banks of Ern,
As light 's a bird upon a thorn.

III.

Her bonnie face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet,
As was the blink o' Phemie's ee.

IV.

The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I hae been;
But Phemie was the blithest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.

Blithe, blithe, and merry was she,
Blithe was she but and ben;
Blithe by the banks of Ern,
And blithe in Glenturit glen.

[The heroine of this song was Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, called, in the poetic language of the Scottish mountains, the Flower of Strathmore. She happened to meet with Burns during one of his northern tours, and, by her affability and beauty, called forth this charming lyric. She accompanied him as one of a small party, along the banks of Ern, to romantic Glenturit, and loved to stand by the Poet's side and point out what pleased her in the landscape. From living beauty he took the hint for his song, and happily has he handled the subject; only two lines of the chorus belong to the elder muse.—"I composed these verses," says the Poet, in his notes in the Museum, "while I stayed at Auchtertyre with Sir William Murray."]

To Daunton me.

Tune—*To Daunton me.*

I.

THE blude red rose at Yule may blaw,
The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,
The frost may freeze the deepest sea;
But an auld man shall never daunton me.

To daunton me, and me so young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue,
That is the thing you ne'er shall see;
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

II.

For a' his meal and a' his maut,
For a' his fresh beef and his saut,
For a' his gold and white monie,
An auld man shall never daunton me.

III.

His gear may buy him kye and yowes,
His gear may buy him glens and knowes;
But me he shall not buy nor fee,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

IV.

He hirples twa-fauld as he dow,
Wi' his teethless gab and his auld beld pow,
And the rain dreeps down frae his red bleer'd e'e—
That auld man shall never daunton me.

To daunton me, and me sae young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue,
That is the thing you ne'er shall see;
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

[The Poet had a Jacobite song of the same name in his thoughts when he wrote his pithy lyric; some of the old verses are curious and to the point:—

"To daunton me, to daunton me,
D'ye ken the things wad daunton me?
Eighty-eight and eighty-nine,
And a' the dreary years sin syne,
With cess and press and Presbytry,
Gude faith, these were like to hae daunton'd me.

"But to wanton me, but to wanton me,
D'ye ken the things that wad wanton me?
To see gude corn upon the rigs,
An' banishment to a' the Whigs,
An' right restor'd where right should be,
O! these are the things that wad wanton me."]

Come boat me o'er to Charlie.

Tune—*O'er the Water to Charlie.*

I.

COME boat me o'er, come row me o'er,
Come boat me o'er to Charlie;
I'll gie John Ross another bawbee,
To boat me o'er to Charlie.

We'll o'er the water and o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie.

II.

I lo'e weel my Charlie's name,
Tho' some there be abhor him:
But O, to see auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's faes before him!

III.

I swear and vow by moon and stars,
And sun that shines so early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I'd die as aft for Charlie.

We'll o'er the water, and o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie!

["Some of these lines are old, and some of them are from the pen of Burns; the second stanza is his, and most of the third. Many songs on the same subject and to the same air were once current in Scotland: in Hogg's Jacobite Relics another version may be found: there are stray verses, too, worthy of being gathered:—

'We'll o'er the water, we'll o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
The mirkest night will draw to light—
There's sunshine yet for Charlie.'

One version takes the song from the lips of a soldier, and gives it to those of a lady. President Forbes bears testimony to the violent admiration of the Scottish ladies for the exiled prince, and we have the assurance of Ray that they would not listen to reason, but were Jacobites, one and all."—CUNNINGHAM.]

A Rose-bud by my Early Walk.

Tune—*The Rose-bud.*

I.

A ROSE-BUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosed bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

II.

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning.

III.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair!
On trembling string, or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tends thy early morning.
So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning.

[The Rose-bud was composed in honour of Miss Jean Cruikshanks, daughter of William Cruikshanks, of St. James's-square, one of the masters of the High School of Edinburgh. To the same young lady was addressed that sweet and tender poem, beginning —

"Beauteous rose-bud, young and gay."]

The air was composed by David Sillar.

Rattlin', Roarin' Willie.

Tune—*Rattlin', roarin' Willie.*

I.

O RATTLIN', roarin' Willie,
O, he held to the fair,
An' for to sell his fiddle,
An' buy some other ware;
But parting wi' his fiddle,
The saut tear blin't his e'e;
And rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me!

II.

O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
O sell your fiddle sae fine;
O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
And buy a pint o' wine!
If I should sell my fiddle,
The warl' would think I was mad;
For mony a rantin' day,
My fiddle and I hae had.

III.

As I cam by Crochallan,
I cannily keekit ben—
Rattlin', roarin' Willie
Was sitting at yon board en';
Sitting at yon board en',
And amang guid companie;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me!

["The hero of this chant," says Burns, "was one of the worthiest fellows in the world —William Dunbar, Esq., writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, and colonel of the Crochallan corps—a club of wits, who took that title at the time of raising the Fencible regiments." The Rattlin', roarin' Willie of Border song was another sort of person: —

"Our Willie's away to Jeddart,
To dance on the rood-day;
A sharp sword by his side,
A fiddle to cheer his way.
The joyous thairms o' his fiddle,
Rob Roole he handled rude;
And Willie left New-Mill banks,
Red wat wi' Robin's blude."

Willie was pursued by Elliot of Stobbs, and taken sleeping among the broom in one of the links of Ousenam-water. What happened to him may be gathered from another stanza;—

"Now may the name of Elliot
Be cursed frae firth to firth,
He has fettered the gude right hand
That keepit the land in mirth;
That keepit the land in mirth,
And charmed maids' hearts frae dool;
O sair will they waut thee, Willie,
When birks are bare at Yule."]

Braving angry Winter's Storms.

Tune—*Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercairny.*

I.

WHERE, braving angry winter's storms,
The lofty Ochels rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
First blest my wondering eyes;
As one who by some savage stream,
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd, doubly marks its beam,
With art's most polish'd blaze.

II.

Blest be the wild sequester'd shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their pow'r!
The tyrant death, with grim controul,
May seize my fleeting breath;
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

[The heroine of this fine song was Margaret

Chalmers. The Poet calls her "one of the most accomplished of women."]

Tibbie Dunbar.

Tune—*Johnny M'Gill.*

I.

O, WILT thou go wi' me,
Sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
O, wilt thou go wi' me,
Sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
Wilt thou ride on a horse,
Or be drawn in a car,
Or walk by my side,
O sweet Tibbie Dunbar?

II.

I care na thy daddie,
His lands and his money,
I care na thy kin,
Sae high and sae lordly:
But say thou wilt hae me
For better for waur—
And come in thy coatie,
Sweet Tibbie Dunbar!

[The air to which Burns wrote this pleasant little song was composed by John M'Gill, a fiddler of Girvan, who named it after himself. The following words have been added to the song:—

"O, see yon green mountain
Beneath yon bright star!
O, see yon moon shining
On turret and scaur!
O, haste thee and mount thee,
For we maun fly far;
It is time to be going,
Sweet Tibbie Dunbar.

O, far ha'e I ridden, love,
All for to see thee;
Much ha'e I bidden, love,
All to be near thee;
For he that loves truly
Maun dree an' maun daur—
So come now or never,
Sweet Tibbie Dunbar!"]

Streams that glide in Orient Plains.

Tune—*Morag.*

I.

STREAMS that glide in orient plains,
Never bound by winter's chains!
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commix'd with foulest stains
From tyranny's empurpled bands:
These, their richly-gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle Gordon.

II.

Spicy forests, ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray,
Hapless wretches sold to toil,
Or the ruthless native's way,
Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil:
Woods that ever verdant wave,
I leave the tyrant and the slave,
Give me the groves that lofty brave
The storms, by Castle Gordon.

III.

Wildly here without controul,
Nature reigns and rules the whole;
In that sober pensive mood,
Dearest to the feeling soul,
She plants the forest, pours the flood:
Life's poor day I'll musing rave,
And find at night a sheltering cave,
Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
By bonnie Castle Gordon.

[Burns conceived the idea of these verses during his too brief visit to Gordon Castle in 1787: he wrote them down as he hurried on to the south, and enclosed them to James Hoy, then residing as librarian with his Grace of Gordon. The duchess guessed them to be written by Dr. Beattie, and when told they were by Burns, she wished they had been written in the Scottish language. She afterwards sent a copy of the song to a Mrs. McPherson, in Badenoch, who sang *Morag*, and other Gaelic songs, in great perfection. The captious humour of Nicol, it will be remembered, shortened the stay of the Poet in the north.]

My Harry was a Gallant Gay.

Tune—*Highlander's Lament.**

I.

MY Harry was a gallant gay,
Fu' stately strode he on the plain;
But now he's banish'd far away,
I'll never see him back again.

O for him back again!
O for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaspie's land,
For Highland Harry back again.

*["The oldest title," says Burns, "I ever heard to this air, was 'The Highland Watch's Farewell to Ireland.' The chorus I picked up from an old woman in Dumblane; the rest of the song is mine." Part of the farm of Mossgiel bears the name of Knockhaspie's land: the Poet recollected this when he modified the chorus from recitation: it is almost needless to add that "The Highland Watch" is the gallant forty-second regiment: and that Highland Harry was Prince

II.

When a' the lave gae to their bed,
I wander dowie up the glen;
I set me down and greet my fill,
And aye I wish him back again.

III.

O were some villains hangit high,
And ilka body had their ain!
Then I might see the joyfu' sight,
My Highland Harry back again.

O for him back again!
O for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaspie's land
For Highland Harry back again.

The Tailor.

Tune—*The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a'.**

I.

THE tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a',
The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a';
The blankets were thin, and the sheets they were sma',
The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a'.

II.

The sleepy bit lassie, she dreaded nae ill,
The sleepy bit lassie, she dreaded nae ill;
The weather was cauld, and the lassie lay still,
She thought that a tailor could do her nae ill.

III.

Gie me the groat again, canny young man;
Gie me the groat again, canny young man;
The day it is short, and the night it is lang,
The dearest siller that ever I wan!

IV.

There's somebody weary wi' lying her lane;
There's somebody weary wi' lying her lane;
There's some that are dowie, I trow wad be fain
To see the bit tailor come skippin' again.

Of the present song, the second verse and the fourth are by Burns: the rest is very old: the air is beautiful, and is played by the Corporation of Tailors at their annual elections and processions. Pennycuik wrote a poem in honour of the trade: a tailor, he said, was accounted by this sarcastic world the ninth part of a man, whereas he was even more than a whole one. The chalk, the shears, the thimble, and the thread, when guided by a scientific eye, produced garments of such beauty as hid the imperfections of the human frame, and enabled the lank and the mis-shapen to assume the port of gods. Even the Bard had reason to rejoice:—

"My breeks were such an arrant clout,
No longer I could go decent out."

The shears, the needle, and the goose do their work so much to his satisfaction that he exclaims, at the close of his meritorious rhyme,—

"I vow the tailor is more than man!"

The two following appear to have furnished Burns with the ideas of the present song. The first is to be found in Herd's collection.

The tailor came to clout the claise,
Sic a braw fellow!
He fill'd the house a' fu' of fleas,
Daffin down and daffin down.
He fill'd the house a' fu' of fleas,
Daffin down and dilly.

The lassie slept ayont the fire,
Sic a braw hizzy!
Oh! she was a' his heart's desire,
Daffin down, &c,

Then Harry's on the Murray road,
And Jeannie to Knockhaspie gane,
Wi' mony a heavy sigh and sob,
For Harry Lumsdale back again.

O for him back again!
O for him back again!
I would gie a' Knockhaspie's land,
For ae shake o' my Harry's hand.

Harry gaed in by yon stane park,
Sometimes light, and sometimes dark,
By a' the lads that I do see,
My Harry is the lad for me.]

* The chorus of this song was taken from a very old one of the same name, which follows.—

The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles and a',
The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles and a',
The beddie was narrow, the sheetie was sma',
He came wi' a rizzle, and rave them in twa.

The beddie was tied frae head to feet,
Wi' ropes o' hay that were wondrous sweet,
And by came the calfie and ate them awa',—
Deal hooly, my laddie, the beddie will fa'.

Henry Stuart, the last male of the ancient Scottish line. That prince lived to a good old age, and when he died a monument was raised to his memory at the expense of George IV., sculptured by the skilful hand of Canova.—CUNNINGHAM.]

[Instead of the Highland Harry here alluded to being Prince Henry Stuart, he was the second son of a Highland chieftain who came down to the Garioch, a district in Aberdeen-shire, and made love to Miss Jeannie Gordon, daughter to the Laird of Knockhaspie. This lady was afterwards married to her cousin Habichie Gordon, second son of the Laird of Rhynie. A farther interesting fact is mentioned by Mr. Buchan of Aberdeen, that sometime after the lady had been married, Harry Lumsdale, the hero of the song, and her former lover, accidentally met her; and while in the act of shaking her kindly by the hand, was treacherously assailed by her husband, who, drawing his sword, lopped off several of Lumsdale's fingers. This the young man took so much to heart that he died shortly after.

The following are a few verses of the old song, which is given entire in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of Burns.—Vol. ii. p. 197.

Then fare ye weel, my Jeannie fair,
Sin' to my suit ye'll nae comply;
Now for your sake I'll never come
To court a wife sae far away.

The lassie she fell fast asleep,
Sic a braw hizzy!
The tailor close to her did creep;
Daffin down, and daffin down.
The tailor close to her did creep,
Daffin down and dilly.

The tailor he came here to sew,
And weel he kent the way to woo,
And aye he pried the lassie's mou,
As he gaed but and ben, O;

Sae weel's he kent the way o't,
The way o't, the way o't;
Sae weel's he kent the way o't,
That she did love the game, O.

[There are other two stanzas to this old ditty, but in the present age they are scarcely admissible.]

Simmer's a pleasant Time.

Tune—*Aye waukin o'.*

I.

Simmer's a pleasant time,
Flow'rs of ev'ry colour;
The water rins o'er the heugh,
And I long for my true lover.

Ay waukin O,
Waukin still and wearie:
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

II.

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I'm eerie;
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

III.

Lanely night comes on,
A' the lave are sleepin';
I think on my bonnie lad,
And I bleer my een with greetin'.

Ay waukin O,
Waukin still and wearie;
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

The first verse is by Burns; the remainder had only the benefit of his revisal. Tytler and Ritson unite in considering this one of our oldest melodies.

Some of the old verses of this song are still held in remembrance; they have a spice of the ridiculous, and also of the gentle:

"I sat down and wrote
My true love a letter;
My love canna read
I love him a' the better;

Ay wakin O,
Wakin ay and wearie;
Come a pleasant dream,
Waft me to my dearie."

There is another version of this song entirely in the poet's hand-writing, entitled "When I sleep I dream," in which the first verse is omitted, and the third reads as follows:—

"Lanely night comes on,
A' this *house* are sleeping,
I think on the bonnie lad
That has my heart a keeping."

Beware o' Bonnie Ann.

Tune—*Ye Gallants bright.*

I.

Ye gallants bright, I rede ye right,
Beware o' bonnie Ann;
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.
Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimply lac'd her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.

II.

Youth, grace, and love, attendant move,
And pleasure leads the van:
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
They wait on bonnie Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man;
Ye gallants braw, I rede you a',
Beware o' bonnie Ann!

[The heroine of this song was Ann Masterton, daughter of Allan Masterton, one of the Poet's steadfast friends, and author of the air of "Strathallan's Lament." She is now Mrs. Derbishire, and resides in London. In her father's house the Poet passed many happy evenings.]

When rosy May comes in wi' Flowers.

Tune—*The Gardener wi' his paidle.*

I.

When rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers,
Then busy, busy, are his hours—
The gardener wi' his paidle.
The crystal waters gently fa';
The merry birds are lovers a';
The scented breezes round him blaw—
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

II.

When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro' the dews he maun repair—
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.
When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws of nature's rest,
He flies to her arms he lo'es the best—
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

[" In other days every trade and vocation had a tune to dance or march to: the air of this song is the march of the gardeners: the title only is old—the rest is the work of Burns. Song was once as natural to man as music is to the birds of the air; but hard work—incessant drudgery rather—has silenced song at the plough—at the loom—in the forge—in the garden—at the carpenter's bench, and at the mason's banker. A song is seldom heard in the land now, save when some ragged wretch raises 'a melancholious croon' as he holds out his hat for alms. Perhaps the ploughman still chants an air as he turns his furrow, and the shepherd still sings as he watches his lambs among the pastoral mountains: in the cities music is mute, save when hired; the pale mechanic has so much to endure in keeping his soul and body together that song is out of the question. Music with him has died into 'a quaver of consternation.' " — CUNNINGHAM.]

Blooming Nelly.

Tune—*On a bank of Flowers.*

I.

ON a bank of flowers, in a summer day,
For summer lightly drest,
The youthful blooming Nelly lay,
With love and sleep opprest;
When Willie, wand'ring thro' the wood,
Who for her favour oft had sued,
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd,
And trembled where he stood.

II.

Her closed eyes, like weapons sheath'd,
Were seal'd in soft repose;
Her lips, still as she fragrant breath'd,
It richer dy'd the rose.
The springing lilies sweetly prest,
Wild—wanton, kiss'd her rival breast;
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd—
His bosom ill at rest.

III.

Her robes, light waving in the breeze,
Her tender limbs embrace!
Her lovely form, her native ease,
All harmony and grace!
Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,
A faltering, ardent kiss he stole;
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd,
And sigh'd his very soul.

IV.

As flies the partridge from the brake,
On fear-inspired wings,
So Nelly, starting, half-awake,
Away affrighted springs:
But Willie follow'd—as he should,
He overtook her in the wood;
He vow'd, he pray'd, he found the maid
Forgiving all and good.

[This song is an improvement on an English lyric, which is given in Allan Ramsay's Tea Table Miscellany. The first verse is as follows;—

"On a bank of flowers
In a summer day,
Inviting and undrest,
In her bloom of youth
Fair Celia lay,
With love and sleep opprest;
When a youthful swain
With admiring eyes,
Wished that he durst
The sweet maid surprise."

The second verse is very free and graphic; the third contains a pretty image;—

"All amaz'd he stood,
With her beauties fir'd,
And blest the courteous wind;
Then in whispers sigh'd,
And the gods desir'd
That Celia might be kind:
When with hopes grown bold
He advanc'd amain,
But she laugh'd loud
In a dream, and again
Repell'd the amorous swain.

The Day Returns.*

Tune—*Seventh of November*

I.

THE day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet,

---

* ["Written in honour of the anniversary of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Riddel, of Friars-Carse. The sense, wit, and loveliness of the lady were sung in the same strain in which the contest for the Whistle is celebrated. In Johnson's Musical Museum the air is marked as the composition of Mr. Riddel; but, as Mr. Thomson remarks, "If it be so. Burns' silence as to that circumstance is unaccountable, considering how eagerly he inquired after the origin of our airs." The correspondence betwixt the poet and Johnson is unfortunately not extant, otherwise this point would, in all probability, have been cleared up."—CUNNINGHAM.

In a letter to Miss Chalmers, dated Ellisland, Sept. 16th, 1783, Burns expressly states the air to have been "composed by a musical gentleman of my acquaintance, for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the 7th of November.]

Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer-sun was half sae sweet.
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line;
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heaven gave me more — it made thee mine!

II.

While day and night can bring delight,
Or nature aught of pleasure give,
While joys above my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone, I live!
When that grim foe of life below
Comes in between to make us part,
The iron hand that breaks our band
It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart.

My Love she's but a Lassie yet.

Tune—*Lady Badinscoth's Reel.*

I.

My love she's but a lassie yet,
My love she's but a lassie yet;
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be half sae saucy yet.
I rue the day I sought her, O,
I rue the day I sought her, O;
Wha gets her need na say she's woo'd,
But he may say he's bought her, O!

II.

Come, draw a drap o' the best o't yet,
Come, draw a drap o' the best o't yet;
Gae seek for pleasure where ye will,
But here I never miss'd it yet.
We're a' dry wi' drinking o't,
We're a' dry wi' drinking o't;
The minister kiss'd the fiddler's wife,
An' could na preach for thinkin' o't.

[Variations abound in this song; some of them are not without merit:—

"My love she's but a lassie yet,
My love she's but a lassie yet;
When she's drap ripe, she's theirs that like,
She'll no be half sae saucy yet."

"We're a' dry wi' drinking o't,
We're a' dry wi' drinking o't;
The piper kiss'd the fiddler's wife,
And could na play for thinking o't.
And yon's the moon that's moving, O,
The hour for maidens' loving, O;
But madam moon, till this bowl's done,
I'll gang nae mair a roving, O!"]

The title and some lines are old; the rest of the song is by Burns.]

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* Var. Sweet and harmless as a child. M.S.

Jamie, come try me.

Tune—*Jamie, come try me.*

CHORUS.

Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me,
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

I.

If thou should ask my love,
Could I deny thee?
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

II.

If thou should kiss me, love,
Wha could espy thee?
If thou wad be my love,
Jamie, come try me.

Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me;
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

["This air is Oswald's," says Burns; "the song is mine." He took the idea from an ancient strain, of which these words only are remembered:—

"If ye wad be my love,
Jamie, come try me."

Other songs to the same air supply pleasing variations:—

"My heart leaps lightly, love,
When ye come nigh me;
If I had wings, my love,
Think na I'd fly thee.
The bright moon and stars, love,
None else espy thee;
And if ye wad win my love,
Jamie, come try me."

Stanzas, containing a similar strain of sentiment, abound;—

"I come from my chamber,
When the moon's glowing;
I walk by the streamlet,
Through the broom flowing;
If ye wad woo me, love,
Wha could deny thee?
I'm far aboon fortune, love,
When I am by thee."]

My bonnie Mary.

Tune—*Go fetch to me a Pint o' Wine.*

I.

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;

That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie;
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law.
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

II.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard afar—
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.

[The Poet recited this song to his brother Gilbert, as a relique of the olden minstrelsy, and inquired if he did not think it beautiful?—"Beautiful!" said his brother; "it is not only that, but the most heroic of lyrics. Ah! Robert, if you would write oftener that way, your fame would be surer." Another account says that Gilbert really believed it to be old, and called it an unequalled thing. Burns speaks of it to Mrs. Dunlop as the work of the old Scottish muse; but, in his notes on the Museum, he says:—"This air is Oswald's; the first half-stanza of the song is old, the rest mine." It was written by Burns out of compliment to the feelings of a young officer about to embark for a foreign shore, whose ship rode by the Berwick-law, and who was accompanied to the pier of Leith by a young lady—the bonnie Mary of the song.

A complete version of the old song is given in Hogg and Motherwell's Edition of Burns, from which we select a few stanzas:—

"As I went out to take the air,
'Twas on the banks of Diveron water,
I chose a maid to be my love,
Were it my fortune for to get her.

Her equal 's not on Diveron side,
Nor any part of Gawdie water;
I dinna care what may betide,
In any way, if I could get her

She's of a genteel middle size,
Her body's always neat and slender,
Her lips are sweet as honey pear,
To which I am an oft pretender.

When I look to her weel-faur'd face.
Her lily hands and lovely fingers,
I clasp her in my arms twa,
Saying, "Waes my heart that we should sinder."

Her cheeks are like the crimson rose,
Her eyes like stars when brightly shining;
She is the girl I dearly love,
And I've wish'd lang out of this pining.

Tho' I had all king Crœsus' rents,
And all possess'd by Alexander;
I'd give it all, and ten times more,
For ae poor night to lie beyond her.

Ye'll bring me here a pint of wine,
A server and a silver tassie,
That I may drink before I gang,
A health to my ain bonny lassie.

Ye powers above increase her love,
That such a prize I may inherit;
To gain her love is all I crave,
And after that we shall be married!"

The author of the above was Alexander Lesley, Esq. of Edin, on Divern side, and grandfather to the late Archbishop Sharp of St. Andrew's. The fair one whom he thus immortalizes was named Helen Christie. He sold the lands of Edin, and removed to a small farm on the estate of Lord Pitsligo, in the parish of Pitsligo, where he died, and was buried in the churchyard of Banff. A stone to his memory marks the spot. The song was composed in the year 1636.]

The Lazy Mist.

Tune—*Here's a health to my true love.*

I.

The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark winding rill;
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear!
As autumn to winter resigns the pale year.
The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown:
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick time is flying, how keen fate pursues!

II.

How long I have liv'd—but how much liv'd in vain!
How little of life's scanty span may remain!
What aspects, old Time, in his progress, has worn!
What ties, cruel fate in my bosom has torn!
How foolish, or worse, till our summit is gain'd!
And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
This life's not worth having with all it can give—
For something beyond it poor man sure must live.

[All that Burns says about the authorship of "The Lazy Mist" is, "This song is mine." The air as well as the name may be found in Oswald's Collection: but the olden time has no farther claims upon the authorship.

This song is a favourite with the Scottish peasantry. The grave and moralizing strain corresponds with the reflecting character of the people.]

The Captain's Lady.

Tune—*O mount and go.*

CHORUS

O MOUNT and go,
Mount and make you ready;
O mount and go,
And be the Captain's Lady.

I.

WHEN the drums do beat,
And the cannons rattle,
Thou shall sit in state,
And see thy love in battle.

II.

When the vanquish'd foe
Sues for peace and quiet,
To the shades we'll go,
And in love enjoy it.
O mount and go,
Mount and make you ready;
O mount and go,
And be the Captain's Lady.

["Part of this song is old, and part of it by Burns: he has not acknowledged it, though Cromek saw it among Johnson's papers in the Poet's handwriting. Some of the old verses are curious:—

'I will away,
And I will not tarry;
I will away,
And be a captain's lady.
A captain's lady
Is a dame of honour:
She has her maidens
Ay to wait upon her,
Ay to wait upon her,
And get all things.
I will away
And be a captain's lady.'

"The conception of the song is superior to the execution: the dancing measure is difficult to suit with words.

"A very eminent author has sneered at the idea of a lady sitting in state and looking at her lover engaged in battle: the picture is in its nature chivalrous: a tournament gave the express image conveyed in the verse of Burns: other instances, not only from poetry, but from history, might be adduced to prove the accuracy of the most accurate of all poets."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Wee Willie Gray

I.

WEE Willie Gray, and his leather wallet;
Peel a willow-wand to be him boots & jacket:
The rose upon the brier will be him trouse and doublet,
The rose upon the brier will be him trouse and doublet.

II.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet;
Twice a lily flower will be him sark and cravat:
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet,
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet.

[This and the following song are imitations of old ballads.]

O Guid Ale comes.

CHORUS.

O GUID ale comes, and guid ale goes,
Guid ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.

I.

I HAD sax owsen in a pleugh,
They drew a' weel eneugh,
I sell'd them a' just ane by ane;
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.

II.

Guid ale hauds me bare and busy,
Gars me moop wi' the servant hizzie,
Stand i' the stool* when I hae done,
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.
O guid ale comes, and guid ale goes,
Guid ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.

[The above song is printed in Johnson's Musical Museum, "corrected by R. Burns," and has been collated with a copy in the handwriting of the Poet.]

Of a' the Airts the Wind can blaw.

Tune—*Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey.*

I.

OF a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild-woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

---

* Stool of repentance.

II.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

III.

Upon the banks o' flowing Clyde
The lasses busk them braw;
But when their best they hae put on,
My Jeannie dings them a':
In hamely weeds she far exceeds
The fairest o' the town;
Baith sage and gay confess it sae,
Tho' drest in russet gown.

IV.

The gamesome lamb, that sucks its dam,
Mair harmless canna be;
She has nae faut (if sic ye ca't,)
Except her love for me;
The sparkling dew, o' clearest hue,
Is like her shining een:
In shape and air nane can compare
Wi' my sweet lovely Jean.

V.

O blaw ye westlin winds, blaw saft
Amang the leafy trees,
Wi' balmy gale, frae hill and dale
Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
That's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae smile o' her wad banish care,
Sae charming is my Jean.

VI

What sighs and vows amang the knowes
Hae passed atween us twa!
How fond to meet, how wae to part,
That night she gaed awa!
The powers aboon can only ken,
To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
As my sweet lovely Jean!

[This is a very popular song, and deservedly so. Burns wrote it in honour of his wife, and "during the honey-moon," as he archly informs us in his notes. The compliment to simple rural beauty and pure innocence was never more felicitously expressed than in the second stanza. The four concluding stanzas do not appear in the earlier editions of this song. They were subsequently added by Burns, who very naturally was fond of the subject. They contain a part of the author's history, and deserve to be held in remembrance.]

Whistle o'er the Lave o't.

Tune—*Whistle o'er the lave o't.*

I.

First when Maggy was my care,
Heaven, I thought, was in her air;
Now we're married—spier nae mair—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.—
Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
Bonnie Meg was nature's child; *
Wiser men than me's beguil'd—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

II.

How we live, my Meg and me,
How we love, and how we 'gree,
I care na by how few may see;
Whistle o'er the lave o't.—
Wha I wish were maggots' meat,
Dish'd up in her winding sheet,
I could write—but Meg maun see't—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

["The minstrel muse of Scotland supplied this air with very merry verses, which may be read in Herd; and sometimes heard sung when the punch-bowl is reeking, and

"The noise and fun grow fast and furious."

Few of the verses will bear quotations:—

"She sent her daughter to the well,
Better she had gane hersel;
She miss'd a foot, and down she fell—
Whistle o'er the lave o't."

Burns composed his song to supersede the old verses, and he succeeded. The air was composed, some hundred and odd years ago, by John Bruce, a musician, belonging to the town of Dumfries, whose merits as a player of reel tunes on the violin are still held in remembrance. Old people said that the heaviest foot became light, and the toil-bent frame erect when Bruce drew his best bow—and that he made the fiddle speak the words of the tune as plain as with a tongue. He is celebrated by John Mayne, in his poem of the 'Siller Gun.'"—Cunningham.]

["The music of this song has long been popular. 'Gentle and simple' have equally acknowledged its life-invigorating notes."—Motherwell.]

O can ye labour lea.

I.

O, can ye labour lea, young man,
An' can ye labour lea;
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
Ye'se never scorn me.

---

* Var.—Sweet and harmless as a child.—MS.

II.

I feed a man at Martinmas,
Wi' airl-pennies three;
An' a' the fau't I fan' wi' him,
He couldna labour lea.

III.

The stibble rig is easy plough'd,
The fallow land is free;
But wha wad keep the handless coof,
That couldna labour lea?

The Banks of Dee.

I.

To thee, lov'd Dee, thy gladsome plains,
Where late wi' careless thought I rang'd,
Though prest wi' care, and sunk in woe,
To thee, I bring a heart unchang'd.

II.

I love thee, Dee, thy banks and braes,
Tho' there Remembrance wake the tear;
For there he rov'd that brake my heart
Yet to that heart still fondly dear.

[This song occurs in Thomson's Collection, vol. vi. p. 62. with Burns's name attached to it. There is a similar song "*To thee lov'd Nith,*" in page 427 of this edition, with the exception of the second line of the second verse, printed in *Italics*, as above. There are some other trifling variations given by Thomson and an additional verse by another hand. The present version is taken from the original in the Poet's own hands.]

O, were I on Parnassus' Hill.

Tune—*My love is lost to me.*

I.

O, WERE I on Parnassus' hill!
Or had of Helicon my fill;
That I might catch poetic skill
To sing how dear I love thee.
But Nith maun be my muse's well,
My muse maun be thy bonnie sel';
On Corsincon I'll glow'r and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

II.

Then come, sweet muse, inspire my lay!
For a' the lee-lang simmer's day
I cou'dna sing, I cou'dna say,
How much, how dear, I love thee.
I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
By heaven and earth I love thee!

III.

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;
And aye I muse and sing thy name—
I only live to love thee.
Tho' I were doom'd to wander on
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run;
Till then—and then I'd love thee.

[In this fine song the Poet welcomed his wife to Ellisland: the Nith, his muse's well, was flowing at hand; and Corsincon, his Nithsdale Parnassus, was at no great distance. It was no sooner written than it became popular: he presented a copy to Miss Staig of Dumfries, with the following characteristic note:—"Mr. Burns presents his most respectful compliments to Miss Staig, and has sent her the song. Mr. B. begs to be forgiven his delaying so long to send it; and allows Miss S. to impute the neglect to any cause under heaven, except want of respect for her commands. Mr. B. would just give the hint to Miss S., that, should the respectful timidity of any of her lovers deny him his powers of speech, that then she will teach him Mr. Burns's song; so that the poor fellow may not be under the double imputation of being neither able to sing nor say."

The Rev. Hamilton Paul says of this beautiful song:—"There is nothing in the whole circle of lyrical poetry, ancient or modern, to be named with it. It bids defiance to comparison." He then quotes the latter half of the second stanza, and exclaims:—"This is what may be called the paroxysm of desire. He draws the picture from nature,—he becomes enamoured,—he forgets himself, he pants for breath, he is unable to continue the description,—and he gives utterance to his feelings in an oath—

"By heaven and earth I love thee."]

O were my Love yon Lilac fair.

Tune—*Hughie Graham.*

I.

O WERE my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;

And I a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing.

II.

How I wad mourn, when it was torn,
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I wad sing, on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

III.

O gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysel' a drap o' dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa'!

IV.

O! there beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa' by Phœbus' light!

[The first two stanzas only of this beautiful song are by Burns.—The last two are old.]

There's a Youth in this City.

Tune—*Neil Gow's Lament.*

I.

THERE'S a youth in this city,
It were a great pity
That he frae our lasses shou'd wander awa';
For he's bonnie an' braw,
Weel favour'd witha',
And his hair has a natural buckle an' a'.
His coat is the hue
Of his bonnet sae blue:
His fecket* is white as the new driven snaw;
His hose they are blae,
And his shoon like the slae,
And his clear siller buckles they dazzle us a'.

II.

For beauty and fortune
The laddie's been courtin';
Weel-featured, weel-tocher'd, weel-mounted, and braw;
But chiefly the siller,
That gars him gang till her,
The pennie's the jewel that beautifies a'.
There's Meg wi' the mailen
That fain wad a haen him;
And Susie, whose daddy was laird o' the ha';
There's lang-tocher'd Nancy
Maist fetters his fancy—
But the laddie's dear sel' he lo'es dearest of a'.

[In his notes to the Museum, Burns says—"This air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it a Lament for his brother. The first half-stanza of the song is old, the rest is mine." "It must be borne in mind that the Poet was sometimes summoned hastily to fill up the gaps which time had made in ancient song, and that he supplied the publisher with the first-fruits of his fancy. Yet, even in the most careless of these effusions, there is a happiness of thought or of expression which few can reach by study."—CUNNINGHAM.]

My Heart's in the Highlands.

Tune—*Failte na Miosg.*

I.

MY heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart 's in the Highlands a chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

II.

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart 's in the Highlands a chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart 's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

["The first half-stanza," says Burns, "of this song is old, the rest is mine."† "Burns

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* Fecket. An under waistcoat with sleeves.

† The following is a complete copy of the old Song:—

O Donaldie, Donaldie, where hae you been?
A hawking and hunting,—gae make my bed clean;
Gae make my bed clean, and stir up the strae,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I gae.

Let's drink and gae hame, boys, let's drink and gae hame,
If we stay ony langer we'll get a bad name;
We'll get a bad name, and we'll fill oursel's fou,
And the lang woods o' Derry are ill to gae thro'.

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and catching the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

O bonny Portmore, ye shine where you charm,
The more I think on you, the more my heart warms;
When I look from you, my heart it is sore,
When I mind upon Valianty, and on Portmore.

There are mony words, but few o' the best,
And he that speaks fewest lives langest at rest;
My mind, by experience teaches me so,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

"Donald Cameron was the author of this very beautiful and very old song. It is well known to most poetical readers, with how little success Burns endeavoured to graft upon this

had the north of Scotland spirit strong within him. His language is tinged with that of the district of 'The Keith Marischall,' and his love of the wild woods and lonesome glens is Celtic rather than Saxon. This accounts for his love of Ossian's poems: no one can properly feel the poetry of those compositions who shares not in the blood of the Gael, and is unacquainted with Highland scenery and Highland chivalry."—CUNNINGHAM.]

John Anderson, my Jo.

Tune—*John Anderson, my Jo.*

I.

JOHN Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent;
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

II.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

[Brash and Reid of Glasgow gave what they called an improved version of "John Anderson" from the pen of Burns. The following are the additional stanzas:—

John Anderson, my jo, John,
I wonder what you mean,
To rise so soon in the morning,
And sit up so late at e'en;
Ye'll blear out a' your e'en, John,
And why should you do so?
Gang sooner to your bed at e'en,
John Anderson, my jo.

II.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When nature first began
To try her cannie hand, John,
Her master-work was man;
And you amang them a', John,
Sae trig frae tap to toe,
She prov'd to be nae journey-work,
John Anderson, my jo.*

III.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
Ye were my first conceit,
And ye need na think it strange, John,
Tho' I ca' ye trim and neat:
Tho' some folks say ye're auld, John,
I never think ye so,
But I think ye're aye the same to me,
John Anderson, my jo.

IV.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We've seen our bairns' bairns,
And yet, my dear John Anderson,
I'm happy in your arms;
And sae are ye in mine, John—
I'm sure ye'll ne'er say no,
Tho' the days are gane that we have seen,
John Anderson, my jo.

V.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
What pleasure does it gie
To see sae mony sprouts, John,
Spring up 'tween you and me!
And ilka lad and lass, John,
In our footsteps to go,
Makes perfect heaven here on earth,
John Anderson, my jo.

VI.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
Frae year to year we've past,
And soon that year maun come, John,
Will bring us to our last;
But let na that affright us, John,
Our hearts were ne'er our foe,
While in innocent delight we liv'd,
John Anderson, my jo.

"These additional stanzas," says Currie, "though they are in the spirit of our Bard, yet every reader of discernment will see they are by an inferior hand. They are not, however, without merit, and may serve to prolong the pleasure which every person of taste must feel, from listening to a most happy union of beautiful music, with moral sentiments that are singularly interesting."

The old minstrel sings in Percy's Black Book of Ballads as follows:—

I.

Woman.—"John Anderson my jo,
Come in as ye gae by;

stock a twig of his own rearing. Even Mr. Cunningham, in his songs of Scotland, admits the fact, and regrets that he could give no more than the first four lines of the original. The whole is now, for the first time, given complete, from the recitation of a very old person."—BUCHAN.

Notwithstanding the specialities enumerated by our friend Mr. Buchan, we are inclined to look upon this song as an importation from the north of Ireland. The province of Ulster, we believe, is still an untrodden field for the collection of ancient Scottish song and ballad lore, which would be well worth the while of any one, having sufficient leisure and a taste that way, to explore. In a colony, old songs and traditions are generally preserved in a higher state of purity and perfection than even in the mother country, for reasons obvious to every understanding; for in no other case are the words of the poet more forcibly exemplified, than in the affection of the emigrant for all that brings fresh to his heart the undying recollection of his native land:

Where'er I roam, whatever lands I see,
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee.
MOTHERWELL.

* The hand of Burns is so visible in this verse that a singer might safely add it, were the song not long enough for the voice already.

And ye sall get a sheep's head
Weel baken in a pie,
Weel baken in a pie,
And the haggis in a pat;
John Anderson my jo,
Come in an' ye's get that."

II.

Man.—And how do ye, Cummer?
And how hae ye thriven?
And how mony bairns hae ye?
Woman.— Cummer, I hae seven.
Man.—Are they to your ain guidman?
Woman.— Na, Cummer, na;
For five of them were gotten,
When he was awa.*

Our Thrissles flourished fresh and fair.

Tune—*Awa, Whigs, awa.*

I.

Our thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,
And bonnie bloom'd our roses;
But Whigs cam like a frost in June,
And wither'd a' our posies.

CHORUS.

Awa, Whigs, awa!
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll do nae guid at a'.

II.

Our ancient crown's fa'n in the dust—
Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o't;
And write their names in his black beuk
Wha gae the Whigs the power o't!

III.

Our sad decay in Church and State
Surpasses my describing;
The Whigs cam o'er us for a curse,
And we hae done wi' thriving.

IV.

Grim vengeance lang has ta'en a nap,
But we may see him wauken;
Gude help the day when royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin!

Awa, Whigs, awa!
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll do nae gude at a'.

[Burns trimmed up this Jacobite song for the Museum, and added some of its bitterest touches:—the verses beginning with "Our ancient crown's fa'n in the dust," and "Grim vengeance lang has ta'en a nap," are from his hand. Tradition supplies more:—

"The deil he heard the strife o' tongues,
And rampin' cam' amang us;
But pitied us sae wi' cursed Whigs,
He turned an' wadna wrang us."

The succession of the House of Hanover was long resented by the northern minstrels.]

Ca' the Ewes.

Tune—*Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes.*

I.

As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid,
And he ca'd me his dearie.

CHORUS.

Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie!

II.

Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide,
Beneath the hazels spreading wide?
The moon it shines fu' clearly.

III.

I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool,
And a' the day to sit in dool,
And naebody to see me.

IV.

Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye'se lie and sleep,
And ye sall be my dearie.

V.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
I'se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad,
And ye may rowe me in your plaid,
And I sall be your dearie.

VI.

While waters wimple to the sea;
While day blinks in the lift sae hie;
'Till clay-cauld death sall blin' my e'e,
Ye sall be my dearie.

* In the first edition of Bishop Percy's work, the second stanza ran thus:—

"And how do ye, Cummer?
And how do ye thrive?
And how mony bairns hae ye?
Woman.— Cummer, I hae *five*.
Man.—Are they all to your ain guidman?
Woman.— Na, Cummer, na;
For *three* of them were gotten
When *Willie* was awa.

Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie!

["Much of this sweet pastoral is old; Burns made several changes and emendations in the ancient words, and added the concluding lines. An old verse or so will show the nature of the Poet's alterations:—

'Yon yowes an' lambs upo' the plain,
Wi' a' the gear my dad did hain,
I'se gie thee if thou'lt be my ain,
My bonnie dearie.

Come weal, come woe, whate'er betide,
Gin ye'll be true, I'se be your bride,
And ye sall row me in your plaid,
My winsome dearie.'

"The Poet afterwards mused upon the same subject and air, and produced a pastoral lyric more worthy of his fame than this pieced and patched composition. The scene of the new song is laid in Cluden side, nigh the ruined towers: the flowers and the hazels which flourish in the verse are to be found on the banks of the stream; and all the singer has to do is to add the figure of some one dear to him, and the picture of the Poet is complete."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Brose and Butter.

I.

O GIE my love brose, brose,
Gie my love brose and butter;
For nane in Carrick or Kyle
Can please a lassie better.

II.

The lav'rock lo'es the grass,
The muirhen lo'es the heather;
But gie me a braw moonlight,
And me and my love together.

O merry hae I been teethin' a heckle.

Tune—*Lord Breadalbane's March.*

I.

O MERRY hae I been teethin' a heckle,
And merry hae I been shapin' a spoon;
And merry hae I been cloutin' a kettle,
And kissin' my Katie when a' was done.
O a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer,
An' a' the lang day I whistle and sing,
A' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer,
An' a' the lang night am as happy 's a king.

II.

Bitter in dool I lickit my winnins,
O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave:
Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linnens,
And blythe be the bird that sings on her grave!
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
An' come to my arms and kiss me again!
Drunken or sober, here 's to thee Katie!
And blest be the day I did it again.

["Flax-dressing is a dusty business, nor did the Poet love it much; for he but twice alludes to it in his poetry. In his letter to Parker, he says of taste in Nithsdale,

'Here words ne'er crost the muses' heckles,
Nor limpit in poetic shackles.'

"In the song before us he goes no deeper into the mystery. It is put into the hands of a travelling tinker, whose craft extended to the repairing of pots and pans, clasping of china, making of spoons, and the teething of heckles. The flax-dresser, as he pulls the head or handful of lint across the steel prongs, is apt, if he pulls rashly, to break some of the teeth, which are made of sheer steel. To restore these is to teethe a heckle."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The braes o' Ballochmyle.

Tune—*Braes o' Ballochmyle.*

I.

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lea,*
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the e'e.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the while,
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the Braes o' Ballochmyle!

II.

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,
Again ye'll charm the vocal air.
But here, alas! for me nae mair
Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile;
Fareweel the bonnie banks of Ayr,
Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!†

["Maria Whitefoord, eldest daughter of Sir John Whitefoord, and now Mrs. Cranston, was the heroine of this sweet song; it was written as a

* Catrine, in Ayr-shire, the seat of the late Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.

† [VAR. Nae joys, alas! for me are here,
Nae pleasure find I in this soil,
Until Maria 'gain appear,
Farewell the braes o' Ballochmyle.]

farewell to the family residence. The scenery is varied and beautiful; the banks of the river are broken into fine dens and glades, and clothed with rich wood — part natural, part planted. The ancestor of the Whitefoords supplied, it is said, the groundwork of the character of Sir Arthur Wardour in the Antiquary: one of the family, Caleb Whitefoord, was a small Poet and critic, and lived and died in London. Ballochmyle passed into the hands of Mr. Alexander, a gentleman who had enriched himself by trade: it is now the property of his son, who resides almost constantly on the estate, and, by his attention to the condition of his peasantry, supplies worthily the place of the ancient family."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The song was first published in the Musical Museum, to a tune by Allan Masterton.

Lament.

WRITTEN AT A TIME WHEN THE POET WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE SCOTLAND *

Tune—*The Banks of the Devon.*

I.

O'ER the mist-shrouded cliffs of the lone mountain straying,
Where the wild winds of winter incessantly rave,
What woes wring my heart while intently surveying
The storm's gloomy path on the breast of the wave!

II.

Ye foam-crested billows, allow me to wail,
Ere ye toss me afar from my lov'd native shore;
Where the flow'r which bloom'd sweetest in Coila's green vale,
The pride of my bosom, my Mary's no more!

III.

No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll wander,
And smile at the moon's rimpled face in the wave;
No more shall my arms cling with fondness around her,
For the dew-drops of morning fall cold on her grave.

IV.

No more shall the soft thrill of love warm my breast,
I haste with the storm to a far-distant shore;
Where unknown, unlamented, my ashes shall rest,
And joy shall revisit my bosom no more.

* Originally published in the Dumfries Journal.

To Mary in Heaven.

Tune—*Death of Captain Cook.*

I.

THOU ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

II.

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will† not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

III.

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene;
The flow'rs sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till too, too soon, the glowing west,
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

IV.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful‡ rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

[The story of Mary Campbell, and the history of this exquisite soug, have been related in the life of the Poet. She was from Campbell-Town, in Argyll-shire, and lived at Coilsfield, in the humble situation of dairy-maid to Colonel Montgomery. She also lived, at one time, as nursery-maid in the family of Burns's friend and patron, Gavin Hamilton, Esq., of Mauchline, where Burns visited her clandestinely. She was handsome rather than lovely, and had the neat foot, and the low melodious voice which the Poet loved. Burns was delighted with her good sense, and on Sundays loved to show her his favourite walks on the banks of the Ayr, in the woods of Coilsfield, and by the stream of Faile, where a thorn is pointed out as connected

† VAR.—Can.—Poet's own MS. ‡ VAR.—Heavenly.—M3.

with their story. Her death, which was sudden, he mourned with much sincerity, and on the anniversary of the day on which she died he was observed to be dull and low spirited.

This affecting and sublime ode was the fruit of one of those annual fits of melancholy musing. It seems to have been composed at the time intimated in the first verse. The Poet requested Johnson to set it to the plaintive air of *Captain Cook.*

Lockhart characterizes "Mary in Heaven" as the "noblest of all his ballads."]

Evan Banks.

Tune—*Savourna Delish.*

I.

Slow spreads the gloom my soul desires,
The sun from India's shore retires:
To Evan Banks with temp'rate ray,
Home of my youth, he leads the day.

II.

Oh! banks to me for ever dear!
Oh! stream whose murmurs still I hear!
All, all my hopes of bliss reside
Where Evan mingles with the Clyde.

III.

And she, in simple beauty drest,
Whose image lives within my breast!
Who, trembling, heard my parting sigh,
And long pursued me with her eye;

IV.

Does she, with heart unchang'd as mine,
Oft in the vocal bowers recline?
Or, where yon grot o'erhangs the tide,
Muse while the Evan seeks the Clyde?

V.

Ye lofty banks that Evan bound!
Ye lavish woods that wave around,
And o'er the stream your shadows throw,
Which sweetly winds so far below;

VI.

What secret charm to mem'ry brings
All that on Evan's border springs!
Sweet banks! ye bloom by Mary's side:
Blest stream! she views thee haste to Clyde.

VII.

Can all the wealth of India's coast
Atone for years in absence lost!
Return, ye moments of delight;
With richer treasures bless my sight!

VIII.

Swift from this desert let me part,
And fly to meet a kindred heart!
Nor more may aught my steps divide
From that dear stream which flows to Clyde.

[This exquisite song is printed in the "Musical Museum," p. 516, with Burns's name attached to it. A copy of the first verse, in his own hand-writing, with the music, also exists. The Poet imagines himself in India, and his allusion to Mary in Heaven is extremely pathetic.]

Eppie Adair.*

Tune—*My Eppie.*

I.

An' O! my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wha wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?
By love, and by beauty,
By law and by duty,
I swear to be true to
My Eppie Adair!

II.

An' O! my Eppie
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wha wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?
A' pleasure exile me,
Dishonour defile me,
If e'er I beguile thee,
My Eppie Adair!

[Other verses, corresponding in measure and sentiment with this clever little song, may be found in our collections:—

"An' O! my fair one,
My gentle, my rare one,
My heart is a sair one,
O'erladen wi' care.
Frae pleasure exile me,
Dishonour defile me,
If e'er I beguile thee,
My Eppie Adair!"

Burns found the air under the name of "My Eppie," in Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion, and gave it the benefit of his genius.

* Those who are acquainted with the old song, called "The Earl of Kilmarnock's Lament," will be at no loss to trace a similiarity to Eppie Adair. We give the first two verses:—

Hey my Eppie,
And how my Eppie
Sae lang as she'll think ere she see me now:
In strong prison I lie,
Has no power to fly,
And I'll never return to my Eppie, I trow.
Farewell to my Eppie,
My wish be wi' Eppie,
Too soon will my Eppie receive my Adieu;
My sentence is past,
The morn is my last,
And I'll never win hame to my Eppie, I trow.

There is sometimes more true genius visible in these hasty and sketchy things than in elaborate compositions.]

The battle of Sheriff-Muir.

Tune—*Cameronian Rant.*

I.

"O CAM ye here the fight to shun,
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
Or were ye at the Sherra-muir,
And did the battle see, man?"
I saw the battle sair and tough,
And reekin'-red ran mony a sheugh,
My heart, for fear, gaed sough for sough,
To hear the thuds, and see the cluds,
O' clans frae woods, in tartan duds,
Wha glaum'd at kingdoms three, man.

II.

The red-coat lads, wi' black cockauds,
To meet them were na slaw, man;
They rush'd and push'd, and blude outgush'd,
And mony a bouk did fa', man:
The great Argyle led on his files,
I wat they glanc'd for twenty miles:
They hack'd and hash'd, while broadswords clash'd,
And thro' they dash'd, and hew'd and smash'd,
'Till fey men died awa, man.

III.

But had ye seen the philibegs,
And skyrin tartan trews, man;
When in the teeth they dar'd our Whigs
And covenant true blues, man;
In lines extended lang and large,
When baiginets o'erpower'd the targe,
And thousands hasten'd to the charge,
Wi' Highland wrath they frae the sheath
Drew blades o' death, 'till, out o' breath,
They fled like frighted doos, man.

IV.

"O how deil, Tam, can that be true?
The chace gaed frae the north, man;
I saw mysel they did pursue
The horsemen back to Forth, man;
And at Dunblane, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straught to Stirling wing'd their flight;"
But, cursed lot! the gates were shut;
And mony a huntit, poor red-coat,
For fear amaist did swarf, man!"

V.

"My sister Kate cam up the gate
Wi' crowdie unto me, man;
She swore she saw some rebels run
Frae Perth unto Dundee, man:
Their left-hand general had nae skill,
The Angus lads had nae good will
That day their neebors' blude to spill;
For fear by foes, that they should lose
Their cogs o' brose, they scar'd at blows,
And hameward fast did flee, man."

VI.

They've lost some gallant gentlemen,
Amang the Highland clans, man;
"I fear my Lord Panmure is slain,"
Or in his en'mies' hands, man:
Now wad ye sing this double fight,
Some fell for wrang, and some for right;
And mony bade the warld guid-night;
Say pell, and mell, wi' muskets' knell,
How Tories fell, and Whigs to hell
Flew off in frighted bands, man.*

---

* ["This Poem," says Gilbert Burns, "I am pretty well convinced, is not my brother's, but more ancient than his birth." Johnson, in his Musical Museum, assigns it to Burns. On a comparison with the original song, it appears that Burns has both modified and improved his version. He was offended with Barclay, a dissenting minister in Edinburgh, for having handled the Highland clans and chiefs rather abruptly, in his rhyming dialogue between Will Lickladle and Tam Cleancogue, on the battle of Sherriff-muir. Some of the verses of Barclay have both spirit and humour. The following are those from which Burns has selected for the subject of his song:—

WILL.
Pray *came you here the fight to shun?*
Or keep *the sheep with me, man?*
Or were you at the Sheriff-moor,
And did the battle see, man?
Pray tell me whilk of the parties won
For well I wat I saw them run,
Both south and north when they begun,
To pell and mell, and kill and fell,
With muskets snell, and pistols knell,
And some to hell
Did flee, man.

TAM.
But, my dear Will, I kenna still
Whilk o' the twa did lose, man;
For weel I wat they had good skill
To set upo' their foes, man;
The red-coats they are train'd, you see,
The clans always disdain to flee,
Wha then should gain the victory?
But the Highland race, all in a brace,
With a swift pace, to the Whigs' disgrace,
Did put to chase
Their foes man.

WILL.
Now how deil, Tam, can this be true?
I saw the chace gae north, man.

TAM.
But well I wat they did pursue
Them even unto Forth, man.
Frae Dumblain they ran in my own sight,
And got o'er the bridge with all their might,
And those at Stirling took their flight.
Gif only ye had been wi' me,
You had seen them flee of each degree,
For fear to die
Wi' sloth, man.

WILL.
My sister Kate came o'er the hill,
Wi' crowdie unto me, man,
She swore she saw them running still
Frae Perth unto Dundee, man.
The left wing gen'ral had na skill,

Young Jockey.

Tune—*Young Jockey.*

I.

YOUNG Jockey was the blythest lad
In a' our town or here awa:
Fu' blythe he whistled at the gaud,
Fu' lightly danced he in the ha'.
He roos'd my een, sae bonnie blue,
He roos'd my waist sae genty sma',
And aye my heart came to my mou'
When ne'er a body heard or saw.

II.

My Jockey toils upon the plain,
Thro' wind and weet, thro' frost and snaw;
And o'er the lea I leuk fu' fain,
When Jockey's owsen hameward ca'.
An' aye the night comes round again,
When in his arms he taks me a',
An' aye he vows he'll be my ain,
As lang 's he has a breath to draw.

["Johnson put the letter Z to this song denoting that it was old, with additions. What is old of it may be found in Oswald's Collection, under the title of—

'Jockie was the blythest lad in a' our town.'

With the exception of three or four lines, it is the work of Burns. The Poet often sat down to modify old strains to suit the music, and rose after having penned verses wholly, or almost wholly, new. He had no pleasure in allowing an old song to pass through his hands without bestowing upon it a few characteristic touches, to mend the humour and improve the sentiment. It will generally be found that he has bestowed life and truth wherever he made an alteration, and that he has obeyed the spirit of the old composition."—CUNNINGHAM.]

O, Willie brew'd a Peck o'Maut.*

Tune—*Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut.*

I.

O, WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blither hearts, that lee lang night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.

CHORUS.

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

II.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!

III.

It is the moon—I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;

The Angus lads had no good will
That day their neighbours' blood to spill;
For fear by foes that they should lose
Their cogues of brose, all crying woes,
Yonder them goes,
D'ye see, man?

TAM.

I see but few like gentlemen
Amang yon frighted crew, man;
I fear my lord Panmure be slain,
Or that he's ta'en just now, man;
For tho' his officers obey,
His cowardly commons run away,
For fear the red coats them should slay;
The sodgers' hail make their hearts fail,
See how they scale, and turn their tail,
And plow, man.

WILL.

But Scotland has not much to say,
For such a fight as this is,
Where baith did fight, baith run away,
The devil take the miss is
That ev'ry officer was not slain
That run that day, and was not ta'en,
Either flying from or to Dumblain;
When Whig and Tory, in their 'fury,'
Strove for glory, to our sorrow
The sad story
Hush is.]

* In the Harp of Caledonia we find an interesting sequel to this Song, by its Editor, Mr. Struthers, the author of the "Poor Man's Sabbath," alike creditable to the head and heart of that amiable individual.

The night it flew, the grey cock crew,
Wi' blythesome clap o'er a' the three;
But pleasure beam'd ilk moment new,
And happier still they hop'd to be.
For they were na fou, na, nae that fou,
But just a drap in ilka e'e;
The cock might craw, the day might daw,
They sippled aye the barley bree.

The moon that from her silver horn
Pour'd radiance over tower and tree,
Before the fast approaching morn,
Sank far behind yon western sea.
Yet they were na fou, na, nae that fou,
But just a drap in ilka e'e;
The cock might craw, the day might daw,
They sippled aye the barley bree.

And soon the gowden beams o' day
Ting'd a' the mountain taps sae hie,
And burnies' sheen with bickering play
Awoke the morn's wild melody.
But aye they sat, and aye they sang,
"There's just a wee drap in our e'e;
And monie a day we've happy been,
And monie mae we hope to be."

That moon still fills her silver horn,
But ah! her beams nae mair they see:
Nor crowing cock or dawning morn
Disturbs the worm's dark revelry.
For they were na fou, na, nae that fou,
But clay-cauld death has clos'd ilk e'e;
And waefu', now the gowden morn
Beams on the graves o' a' the three.

Nae mair in learning Willie toils,
Nor Allan wakes the melting lay,
Nor Rab, wi' fancy-witching wiles,
Beguiles the hour o dawning day.
For though they were na very fou,
That wicked wee drap in the e e
Has done its turn—untimely, now
The green grass waves o'er a' the three.]

She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

IV.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
A cuckold, coward loon is he!
Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!
We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

["The scene of this song is Laggan, in Dunscore, a small estate which Nicol bought that he might be near Burns; which induced the latter to call him ironically "The illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills." It was composed to commemorate the "house-heating," as entering upon possession of a new house is called in Scotland. William Nicol made the browst strong and nappy; and Allan Masterton, then on a visit at Dalswinton, crossed the Nith, and, with the Poet and his celebrated punch-bowl, reached Laggan

"A wee before the sun gaed down."

The sun, however, rose on their carousal, if the tradition of the land may be trusted.

"'We had such a joyous meeting,' says Burns, 'that Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, to celebrate the business.' Allan accordingly composed the air, and Robert wrote the verses. They became almost instantly popular. The punch was made, it is said, by the experienced hand of Nicol, a jovial man and no flincher; and more merry stories and more queer tales were told on that night, as a person who waited on them asserted, "than wad hae made a book." It was the pleasure of Nicol, sometimes, when at table, to assert that, as a punishment for keeping other than sober company, he was enduring a sort of hell upon earth—nay, he would declare that he was dead and condemned — suffering penal torments — and relate conversations which he had held with the Prince of Darkness concerning friends left behind. These strange sallies had generally an ironical meaning; and once, it is said, when glancing at the Poet's irregularities, the latter exclaimed—

'Losh, man, hae mercy wi' your knatch—
Your bodkin's bauld.'

"The bowl in which Willie made the punch for this carousal is formed of Inverary marble, and was wrought for the Poet by his father-in-law, a skilful mason. On the death of Burns, it was rimmed and bottomed with silver, and presented to Alexander Cunningham. On his death, after several vicissitudes of fortune, it fell into the hands of my friend Archibald Hastie, of London (now the honourable member for Paisley), who, sensible of the worth and the use of a relic so precious, preserves it with proper care; and duly, on the 25th of January, sets it before a select company of Burns-ites, full of the reeking liquor which its great owner loved. An Irish gentleman wished to know, it is said, if gold could buy it; but, observing the owner shake his head, exclaimed, 'It is very well where it is, but I wished to take it to Ireland with me, for Burns, to be a Scotchman, had more of the right Irish heart about him than any boy that ever penned ballads.'"—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

Happy Friendship.

HERE around the ingle bleezing,
Wha sae happy and sae free;
Tho' the northern wind blaws freezing,
Frien'ship warms baith you and me.

CHORUS.

Happy we are a' thegither,
Happy we'll be yin an' a',
Time shall see us a' the blyther
Ere we rise to gang awa'.

II.

See the miser o'er his treasure
Gloating wi' a greedy e'e!
Can he feel the glow o' pleasure
That around us here we see?

III.

Can the peer, in silk and ermine,
Ca' his conscience half his own;
His claes are spun an' edged wi' vermin,
Tho' he stan' afore a throne!

IV.

Thus then let us a' be tassing
Aff our stoups o' gen'rous flame;
An', while roun' the board 'tis passing,
Raise a sang in frien'ship's name.

V.

Frien'ship maks us a' mair happy,
Frien'ship gies us a' delight;
Frien'ship consecrates the drappie,
Frien'ship brings us here to-night.

Happy we've been a' thegither,
Happy we've been yin an' a',
Time shall find us a' the blyther
When we rise to gang awa'.

[The history of the above heart-stirring song —now for the first time communicated to the public—is as follows:—Burns, on one occasion, was on a visit at a friend's house for two or three days; and, during his stay there, a convivial party met, at which the bard was re-

quested to favour the company with a poetical effusion. He promptly complied by writing the song in question. The original MS. is now in the possession of Captain Hendries, who commands a Scottish trading vessel, and who is nephew to the gentleman at whose festive board Burns was entertained on the evening alluded to. We are indebted, for this interesting relic of the immortal bard, to Mr. J. Burden, jun., of Camden Town, who supplied the printer of this edition with a copy, while the work passing through the press.—C.]

The Battle of Killiecrankie.

Tune—*Killiecrankie.*

I.

WHARE hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Where hae ye been sae brankie, O?
O, whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Cam ye by Killiecrankie, O?
An' ye had been whare I hae been,
Ye wad na been so cantie, O;
An' ye had seen what I hae seen,
On the braes of Killiecrankie, O.

II.

I fought at land, I fought at sea;
At hame I fought my auntie, O;
But I met the Devil an' Dundee,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.
The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr,
An' Clavers got a clankie, O;
Or I had fed an Athole gled,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

[" The battle of Killiecrankie, and the death of Viscount Dundee, are events well known. With that brave fierce man perished the cause of the Stuarts: he gained the victory over fearful odds, but fell in the moment of obtaining it. When the pursuit slackened, Mackay exclaimed, " Graham is dead!—Graham is dead!" One of the Viscount's veterans who fought in the battle of Sherriff-muir, on perceiving the hesitation of Erskine to attack the centre, after having defeated one of the wings, exclaimed bitterly, " Oh for one hour of Dundee!" His skill in improving an advantage was equal to his courage in obtaining it. Pitcur was a man of equal valour and strength: he fell in the midst of the action.

The character of Graham has been handled with exquisite skill by Scott in " Old Mortality."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Blue-eyed Lass.

Air—*The Blue-eyed Lass.*

I.

I GAED a waefu' gate yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I dearly rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
Twa lovely een o' bonnie blue.
'Twas not her golden ringlets bright;
Her lips, like roses, wet wi' dew,
Her heaving bosom, lily-white—
It was her een sae bonnie blue.

II.

She talk'd, she smil'd, my heart she wyl'd;
She charm'd my soul—I wist na how;
And ay the stound, the deadly wound,
Came frae her een sae bonnie blue.
But spare to speak, and spare to speed;
She'll aiblins listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead
To her twa een sae bonnie blue.

[" The 'blue eyed lass was Jean Jeffrey, one of the daughters of the minister of Lochmaben. The Poet, on a visit to King Bruce's borough, drank tea, and spent an evening at the manse. The honours of the table were performed by Miss Jeffrey, a rosy girl of seventeen, with winning manners and laughing blue eyes. Next morning the Poet wrote and sent her the song, greatly to her surprise and pleasure. She is now Mrs. Renwick, and lives in New York.

" The air to which the song is written was composed by Robert Riddel, of Glenriddell, and is a favourite in Dumfries-shire. It is, however, beyond the power of many good singers, and can only be given to perfection by a voice rich in tone, and high in its reach. It was the fortune of Burns to meet with many friends whose knowledge in musical composition aided him in his lyric verse. Clarke, Masterton, and Riddel were all men of scientific skill. He had, however, through the help of his mother and the dames of Kyle, mastered a great number of airs, and laid in a vast stock of old rhymes, such as starting-lines and choruses, which he wrought into his productions. His note-books are full of snatches—some devout, some merry, and some wild."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Banks of Nith.

Tune—*Robie donna Gorach.*

I.

THE Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith, to me,
Where Cummins ance had high command:

When shall I see that honour'd land,
That winding stream I love so dear!
Must wayward fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here?

II.

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom!
How sweetly wind thy sloping dales,
Where lambkins wanton thro' the broom!
Tho' wandering, now, must be my doom,
Far from thy bonnie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
Amang the friends of early days!*

Tam Glen.

Tune—*Tam Glen.*

I.

My heart is a-breaking, dear Tittie!
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

II.

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fallow,
In poortith I might mak a fen';
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

III.

There's Lowrie the laird o' Drumeller,
"Guid day to you, brute!" he comes ben:
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

IV.

My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

V.

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me guid hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

VI.

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,
My heart to my mou' gied a sten;
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written—Tam Glen.

VII.

The last Halloween I lay waukin
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam up the house staukin,
And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

VIII.

Come counsel, dear Tittie! don't tarry—
I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

[Tam Glen is the title of an old song and older Scottish air. Of the former nothing remains save a portion of the chorus; and the latter is not likely to die, if one of the cleverest lyrics of the north can preserve it. This song no sooner made its appearance than it became a favourite: it was sung in the field and at the fire-side. Husbandman, as he met husbandman, slapped his thigh and exclaimed—

"The very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!"]

Frae the Friends and Land I Love.

Air—*Carron Side.*

I.

Frae the friends and land I love,
Driv'n by fortune's felly spite,
Frae my best belov'd I rove,
Never mair to taste delight;
Never mair maun hope to find
Ease frae toil, relief frae care:
When remembrance wracks the mind,
Pleasures but unveil despair.

II.

Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
Desert ilka blooming shore,
Till the fates, nae mair severe,
Friendship, love, and peace restore;
Till Revenge, wi' laurell'd head,
Bring our banish'd hame again;
And ilka loyal bonnie lad
Cross the seas and win his ain.

* ["The Poet imagined himself in a distant land; and recalling the romantic hills and lovely valleys of Nithsdale, as he mused, composed this sweet song. The Comyns "once had high command" in the district: one of their strong places was at Castledykes, immediately below Dumfries: another was at Dalswinton, a spot of great beauty, now the residence of one more than worthy of being its proprietor—James Macalpine Leny, Esq. Part of Comyn's Castle was standing as late as the year 1794. The walls were twelve feet thick, composed of hewn free-stone, and cemented with mortar of such strength that the stones separated any where save at the joints. The castle had evidently been consumed by fire. Opposite Dalswinton stands The Isle, an old tower surrounded by gardens and orchards. Ellisland is farther up the Nith; with Friars-Carse, and Blackwood, the property of William Copland, descended from John Copland who took David Bruce prisoner in the battle of Durham. The house of Blackwood stands on a bend of the stream; behind is a lofty hill studded with fine clumps of natural wood, the relics of the old Caledonian forest; before it the Nith winds along a rich extent of holmland; while towards the north, in the middle of the high road from Glasgow, grows that magnificent oak called the "Three Brethren." Three straight, tall shafts spring up at an equal distance from each other, and it is believed that they unite in the ground below: they are of similar girth: the branches of each are perfectly alike; and the peasantry say there is not a bough nor a leaf on one but the same will be found on the other. The three, at a distance, seem one vast tree, of a conical shape."—Cunningham.]

[Burns, in his notes on the Musical Museum, says of this song, "I added the last four lines by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem—such as it is." Had the Poet been asked where he found the other twelve lines of the song, we know not what answer he would have made—for they are in none of our lyrical collections. In truth, they speak plainly of his own personal history:—the jacobitical conclusion was an after-thought.

The air of the song is called "Carron Side," and may be found in the eighth volume of Oswald's Collection. The composer has, however, availed himself of some passages from the well-known old air of "Todlen' Hame." "A poet," says Burns, in allusion to his habit of amending the ancient strains, "should mend a song as the Highlander mended his pistol—he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel."]

Sweet closes the Evening.

Tune—*Craigie-burn-wood.*

I.

SWEET closes the evening on Craigie-burn-wood,
And blithely awaukens the morrow; [wood
But the pride of the spring in the Craigie-burn-
Can yield to me nothing but sorrow.

CHORUS.

Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O! to be lying beyond thee;
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

II.

I see the spreading leaves and flowers,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But pleasure they hae nane for me,
While care my heart is wringing.

III.

I canna tell, I maunna tell,
I darena for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

IV.

I see thee gracefu', straight, and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonnie;
But oh, what will my torments be,
If thou refuse thy Johnnie!

V.

To see thee in anither's arms,
In love to lie and languish,
'Twad be my dead, that will be seen,
My heart wad burst wi' anguish.

VI.

But, Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
Say, thou lo'es nane before me;
And a' my days o' life to come
I'll gratefully adore thee.

Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O, to be lying beyond thee;
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

["This song was composed in honour of the charms of Jean Lorimer, to whom, under the name of CHLORIS, the Poet has addressed several of his most enchanting songs, and who was then residing at Craigie-burn-wood, near Moffat; the poet wrote it to aid the eloquence of a Mr. Gillespie, who was paying his addresses to her. Neither the Poet's verse nor the lover's language prevailed: Jean married an officer, of the name of Whelpdale—lived with him a few months—quitted him, in consequence of great provocation, and then took up her residence in Dumfries, where she had many opportunities of seeing the Poet. The tune was picked up from a country-girl's singing, and is one of the finest of all the airs of Caledonia. Burns altered this song a little, and inserted it afterwards in the collection of George Thomson: he very properly left out the words of the chorus, adopted from an old ballad—not remarkable for its delicacy."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Come rede me, Dame.

I.

COME rede me, dame, come tell me, dame,
And nane can tell mair truly,
What colour maun the man be of,
To love a woman duly.

II.

The carlin clew baith up and down,
And leugh and answer'd ready,
I learn'd a sang in Annandale,
A dark man for my lady.

III

But for a country quean like thee,
Young lass, I tell thee fairly,
That wi' the white I've made a shift,
And brown will do fu' rarely.

IV.

There's mickle love in raven locks,
The flaxen ne'er grows youden,
There's kiss and hause me in the brown,
And glory in the gowden.

Cock up your Beaver.

Tune—*Cock up your beaver.*

I.

When first my brave Johnnie lad
Came to this town,
He had a blue bonnet
That wanted the crown;
But now he has gotten
A hat and a feather,—
Hey, brave Johnnie lad,
Cock up your beaver!

II.

Cock up your beaver,
And cock it fu' sprush,
We'll over the border
And gie them a brush;
There's somebody there
We'll teach better behaviour—
Hey, brave Johnnie lad,
Cock up your beaver!

["This is a much amended version of a song partly published by Herd: some of the old lines are not amiss:—

'Cock up your beaver,
And cock it na wrang;
We'll a' to England
Ere it be lang.'

Burns seems to have glanced, in the second verse, at a sarcastic song directed by the English against the Scots at the accession of the House of Stuart. The man of the south, with all the insolence of wealth, thus questions his northern neighbour:—

'Well met, Jockie, whither away,
Shall we two have a word or tway?
Thou wast so lousie the other day,
How the devil comes you so gay?

Ha! ha! ha! by sweet Saint Anne,
Jockie is grown a gentleman.

'Thy belt that was made of a white leather thong,
Which thou and thy father wore so long,
Are turned to hangers of velvet strong,
With gold and pearl embroider'd among.

'Thy bonnet of blue, which thou worest hither,
To keep thy skonce from wind and weather,
Is thrown away, the devil knows whither,
And turn'd to a beaver hat and feather.

Ha! ha! ha! by sweet St. Anne,
Jockie is turn'd a gentleman.'

"This is a picture of prejudice as well as of costume. The Scotch were not insensible of the advantage of visiting their neighbours besouth the Tweed. One humble pedestrian, on reaching Lancashire, saw several bodies hanging on gibbets: he paused, and exclaimed, 'God be praised! I have reached a civilized land at last—here the law is in full operation."—Allan Cunningham.]

My Tocher's the Jewel.

Tune—*My Tocher's the Jewel.*

I.

O Meikle thinks my luve o' my beauty,
And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin;
But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie
My tocher's the jewel has charms for him.
It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree;
It's a' for the hiney he'll cherish the bee;
My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller
He canna hae luve to spare for me.

II.

Your proffer o' luve's an airl-penny,
My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
But an ye be crafty, I am cunnin,
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune maun try.
Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
And ye'll crack your credit wi' mae nor me.

[" Burns wrote these verses for the Museum to an air by Oswald: the Poet wished them to be sung to a tune called 'Lord Elcho's favourite,' of which he was an admirer. Readers, acquainted with the Lowlands of Scotland, may perhaps remember rustic rhymes something akin to the last four lines of this song:—

'I'll set her up on yon crab-tree,
It's sour and dour, and so is she;—
I'll set her upon yon bane-dyke,
For she'll be rotten ere I be ripe.'

Burns had an intimate acquaintance with the quaint sayings, the curious remarks, the pithy saws, the moral adages, and the moralizing rhymes of Scotland. He introduces them often, and generally with great happiness."—Cunningham.]

Guidwife count the Lawin.

Tune—*Guidwife count the Lawin.*

I.

Gane is the day, and mirk's the night,
But we'll ne'er stray for fau't o' light,
For ale and brandy's stars and moon,
And blude-red wine's the rising sun.

Then guidwife count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin,
Then guidwife count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair!

II.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
And semple-folk maun fecht and fen';
But here we're a' in ae accord,
For ilka man that's drunk 's a lord.

III.

My coggie is a haly pool,
That heals the wounds o' care and dool;
And pleasure is a wanton trout,
An' ye drink but deep ye'll find him out.
Then gudewife count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin;
Then gudewife count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair!

[Burns supplied the air as well as the words of this song to the Museum: he says in his notes, "The chorus of this is part of an old song, one stanza of which I recollect:—

'Every day my wife tells me
That ale and brandy will ruin me;
But if gude liquor be my dead,
This shall be written on my head—
O gudewife count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin:
O gudewife count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair.' "]

There'll neber be peace till Jamie comes Hame.

Tune—*There are few gude fellows when Willie's awa.*

I.

By yon castle wa', at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, tho' his head it was grey;
And as he was singing, the tears fast down came,
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

II.

The church is in ruins, the state is in jars;
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars;
We darena weel say't, tho' we ken wha's to blame—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!

III.

My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
And now I greet round their green beds in the yerd.
It brak the sweetheart of my faithfu' auld dame—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

IV.

Now life is a burthen that bows me down,
Sin' I tint my bairns, and he tint his crown;
But till my last moments my words are the same—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!

["The bard was in one of his jacobitical moods when he wrote this fine song; that he was frequently so his lyrics sufficiently prove. As time passed on, the French revolution, upsetting all established things, and vindicating in theory, if not in practice, the great principle of equality, set opinions welcome to human nature afloat, and a change came over the musings of Burns. In this he was countenanced by many high and low; the high-born Stanhope wrote himself "citizen" as well as the humble-born Joseph Ritson."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Bonnie lad that's far awa':

Tune—*Owre the Hills and far awa'.*

I.

O how can I be blythe and glad,
Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa?
When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa?

II.

It's no the frosty winter wind,
It's no the driving drift and snaw;
But aye the tear comes in my e'e,
To think on him that's far awa.
But aye the tear comes in my e'e,
To think on him that's far awa.

III.

My father pat me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a',
But I hae ane will tak' my part,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.
But I hae ane will tak' my part,—
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

IV.

A pair o' gloves he bought for me,
And silken snoods * he gae me twa;
And I will wear them for his sake,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.
And I will wear them for his sake,—
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

V.

O weary winter soon will pass,
And spring will cleed the birken-shaw;
And my young babie will be born,
And he'll be hame that's far awa.
And my young babie will be born,
And he'll be hame that's far awa.

["This little lamentation of a desolate damsel," says Jeffrey, "is tender and pretty." It was written, it is said, in allusion to the treatment of Jean Armour by her father, when he heard that she had not dismissed the Poet from her heart, but still kept up a correspondence. Herd's collection supplied him with strains which he has beautified greatly. The old song begins thus:—

'How can I be blythe or glad,
Or in my mind contented be,
When the bonny, bonny lad that I lo'ed best
Is banish'd from my company?
Though he is banish'd for my sake,
I his true love will still remain;
But O that I was, and I wish I was,
In the chamber where my true love is in.' "

The air was unknown to our collections before the days of Burns: he is said to have caught it up from the singing of his mother.]

* Ribands for binding the hair.

I do confess thou art sae fair.

Tune—*I do confess thou art sae fair.*

I.

I DO confess thou art sae fair,
I wad been o'er the lugs in luve,
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak thy heart could muve.
I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art sae thriftless o' thy sweets,
Thy favours are the silly wind,
That kisses ilka thing it meets.

II.

See yonder rose-bud, rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy;
How sune it tines its scent and hue
When pu'd and worn a common toy!
Sic fate, ere lang, shall thee betide,
Tho' thou may gaily bloom awhile;
Yet sune thou shalt be thrown aside
Like ony common weed and vile.

[Burns says, "This song is altered from a Poem by Sir Robert Aytoun, private secretary to Mary and Anne, queens of Scotland. The poem is to be found in James Watson's collection of Scottish poems, the earliest collection printed in Scotland.—I think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scots dress." The following are the old words of this song:—

"I do confess thou'rt smooth and fair,
And I might have gone near to love thee;
Had I not found the slightest prayer,
That lips could speak, had power to move thee;
But I can let thee now alone
As worthy to be lov'd by none.

"I do confess thou'rt sweet; yet find
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,
Thy favours are but like the wind,
That kisseth every thing it meets;
And since thou canst with more than one,
Thou'rt worthy to be kissed by none.

"The morning rose, that untouch'd stands,
Arm'd with her briars, how sweetly smells!
But pluck'd and strain'd through ruder hands,
Her sweet no longer with her dwells,
But scent and beauty both are gone,
And leaves fall from her, one by one.

"Such fate, ere long, will thee betide,
When thou hast handled been awhile;
Like sun-flowers to be thrown aside,
And I shall sigh while some will smile,
To see thy love for more than one,
Hath brought thee to be lov'd by none."

A monument to Aytoun, surmounted by a very handsome bust, stands in Westminster Abbey.]

Yon Wild Mossy Mountains.

Tune—*Yon wild mossy Mountains.*

I.

YON wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the heather to feed, [his reed.
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on
Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the the heather to feed, [on his reed.
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes

II.

Not Gowrie's rich valleys, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o' yon wild, mossy moors;
For there, by a lanely, sequester'd clear stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.
For there, by a lanely, sequester'd clear stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.

III.

Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path, [strath;
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow
For there, wi' my lassie, the day-lang I rove,
While o'er us, unheeded, flee the swift hours o' love.
For there, wi' my lassie, the day-lang I rove,
While o'er us, unheeded. flee the swift hours o' love.

IV.

She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair;
O' nice education but sma' is her share;
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.
Her parentage humble as humble can be,
But I lo'e the dear lassie, because she lo'es me.

V.

To beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs? [darts.
And when wit and refinement hae polish'd her
They dazzle our een as they flee to our hearts.
And when wit and refinement hae polish'd her darts,
They dazzle our een, as they flee to our hearts.

VI.

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond sparkling e'e,
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me;
And the heart-beating love, as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!
And the heart-beating love, as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!

["This song," says Burns in his memoranda, "alludes to a part of my private history, which it is of no consequence to the world to know." The heroine is either "Nannie," who dwelt near the Lugar, or "Highland Mary"—most likely the former, for he always spoke out when he alluded to Mary Campbell. It is printed in the Musical Museum.]

It is na, Jean, thy bonnie face.

Tune—*The Maid's complaint.*

I.

It is na, Jean, thy bonnie face,
Nor shape, that I admire,
Altho' thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awake desire.
Something, in ilka part o' thee,
To praise, to love, I find;
But, dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

II.

Nae mair ungen'rous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.
Content am I, if heaven shall give
But happiness to thee:
And, as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

[These verses were originally in English: Burns bestowed a Scottish dress upon them, and made them utter sentiments connected with his own affections. They were printed in the Museum: the air was composed by Oswald, and is one of his finest.]

O saw ye my Dearie.

Tune—*Eppie Macnab.*

I.

O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She's down in the yard, she's kissin' the laird,
She winna come hame to her ain Jock Rab.
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
Whate'er thou hast done, be it late, be it soon,
Thou's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

II.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She lets thee to wit, that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
As light as the air, as fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

["The old song of Eppie Macnab," says Burns, "had more wit than decency." He took compassion on the air, and wrote these words for the Museum. There is something truly whimsical and original in the idea of many of our old songs. Eppie M'Nab is not an exception.

"O come now, my dearie,
My Eppie Macnab,—
I'm wae and I'm weary
For Eppie Macnab.—
Gae dance on the win',
Gae loup down the linn,
For me thou'lt ne'er win—
Take ye that, Jock Rab.

"O had I ne'er seen thee,
My Eppie Macnab!
O had I ne'er seen thee,
My Eppie Macnab!—
Thou'rt light as the air,
And fauser than fair,
And will never see mair
O' thy ain Jock Rab."]

Wha is that at my Bower-door

Tune—*Lass, an' I come near thee.*

I.

Wha is that at my bower door?
O, wha is it but Findlay?
Then gae yere gate, ye'se nae be here!—
Indeed, maun I, quo' Findlay.
What mak ye sae like a thief?
O come and see, quo' Findlay;
Before the morn ye'll work mischief—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

II.

Gif I rise and let you in?—
Let me in, quo' Findlay;
Ye'll keep me waukin wi' your din—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
In my bower if ye should stay?
Let me stay, quo' Findlay;
I fear ye'll bide till break o'day—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

III.

Here this night if ye remain;—
I'll remain, quo' Findlay.
I dread ye'll ken the gate again;—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
What may pass within this bower,—
Let it pass, quo' Findlay;
Ye maun conceal till your last hour!—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

["The air to which this song is set had other words formerly—words which make the gravity of our forefathers a little questionable; some of the lines may be acceptable as a sample:—

'Lass, an I come near thee,
Lass, an I come near thee,
I ll gar a' thy ribbons reel,
Lass, an I come near thee.'

The "Auld Man's Address to the Widow," printed in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, is said by Gilbert Burns to have suggested "Wha is that at my bower-door" to Robert:—

'O who is at my chamber door?
Fair widow, are ye wauking?
Auld carle, your suit give o'er,
Your love lies a' in tauking.
Gie me the lad that's young and tight,
Sweet like an April meadow;
'Tis sic as he can bless the sight
And bosom of a widow.'

The old wooer is not disconcerted: he artfully lets her hear the chink of gold, and desires his guineas to speak; she suddenly relents, and declares that they express affection better than his tongue."—CUNNINGHAM.]

What can a young Lassie do.

Tune—*What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man.*

I.

WHAT can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?
Bad luck on the pennie that tempted my minnie
To sell her poor Jenny for siller an' lan'!
Bad luck on the pennie, &c.

II.

He's always compleenin' frae mornin' to e'enin',
He hosts and he hirples the weary day lang;
He's doyl't and he's dozin', his bluid it is frozen,
O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man!
He's doyl't and he's dozin', &c.

III.

He hums and he hankers, he frets & he cankers,
I never can please him, do a' that I can;
He's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows:
O, dool on the day I met wi' an auld man!
He's peevish and jealous, &c.

IV.

My auld auntie Katie upon me taks pity,
I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan!
I'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heart-break him,
And then his auld brass will buy me a new pan.
I'll cross him, and wrack him, &c. *

The bonnie wee Thing.

Tune—*Bonnie wee Thing.*

I.

BONNIE wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.
Wishfully I look and languish
In that bonnie face o' thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

II.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,
In ae constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!

* [In the "Pills to Purge Melancholy" the title of the air to this song stands thus:—

"What shall a young woman do with an old man?"

An old strain to the same air makes the heroine threaten her ancient wooer with honours of a nature which few men covet, should he obtain her for his wife. The heroine in the version of Burns proposes a plan of domestic annoyance, which cannot fail to send her husband's grey hairs pretty quickly to the grave. Dr. Blacklock wrote a song to the same air, and at the same time with Burns: the best version of the old song is as follows:—

O Katy, dear Katy, I'll tell ye what grieves me,
And for to advise me do all that ye can;
If ye could relieve me a present I'd give ye,
What can a young lassie do with an auld man?

I canna get sleeping for sighing and weeping,
What shall I do, Katy? O here take my fan;
My mind is sae crazy, I'm dull and uneasy,
I am sae perplex'd wi' a crazy auld man.

My mither she teazes me morning and e'ening,
My auntie she vexes me a' the day lang,
To marry the carle because o' his siller—
But what can a lassie do wi' an auld man?

His heart it is cauld, and eke dull and hollow,
The hale o' his carcase is a' skin and bane;
For him and his money I carena a penny—
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?

My Titty, the gipsy, (wha wouldna misca' her?)
On me takes nae pity, but join's wi' the clan,
And says, I may never get sic a gude offer—
But what can a lassie do wi' an auld man?

Sweethearts I've got mony, but she hasna ony,
Sae weel's I can dive in the heart o' her plan:
Because she's neglected, my peace she has wrecket,
And plagues me to marry a doited auld man.

They keep me at hame frae the dance and the market,
Because I am some years younger than ANN;
The tawpie's their dawtie, and they for to please her
Would sell a young lassie unto an auld man.

The rose in its splendour shall blaw in December,
The corbie and craw turn white as the swan,
The owl it shall sing like the linnet in spring,
Before that I marry that crazy auld man!

Miss Jane Allardyce, of Pittenween, was the heroine of this song, which she addresses to her comrade, Miss Katherine Gordon, of Wardass, in the year 1714.]

Bonnie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine!

["Composed," says the Poet, "on my little idol, the charming lovely Davies." Burns paid this lovely little lady many pretty compliments, both in prose and verse. He enclosed this song and sent it to the lady in the following letter:—"When I meet with a person after my own heart, I positively feel what an orthodox Protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts on my fancy like inspiration: and I can no more resist rhyming on the impulse than an Æolian harp can refuse its notes to the streaming air. A distich or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were grey-bearded age: but where my theme is youth and beauty—a young lady, whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment, are equally striking and unaffected—by heavens! though I had lived three-score years a married man, and three-score years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea."]

The tither Morn.

To a Highland Air.

I.

THE tither morn,
When I forlorn,
Aneath an aik sat moaning,
I did na trow
I'd see my Jo,
Beside me, gain the gloaming.
But he sae trig
Lap o'er the rig,
And dawtingly did cheer me,
When I, what reck,
Did least expec'
To see my lad sae near me.

II.

His bonnet he,
A thought ajee,
Cock'd sprush when first he clasp'd me;
And I, I wat,
Wi' fainness grat,
While in his grips he press'd me.
Deil tak' the war!
I late and air
Hae wish'd since Jock departed;
But now as glad
I'm wi' my lad
As short syne broken-hearted.

III.

Fu' aft at e'en
Wi' dancing keen,
When a' were blythe and merry,
I car'd na by,
Sae sad was I
In absence o' my dearie.
But, praise be blest,
My mind's at rest,
I'm happy wi' my Johnny;
At kirk and fair,
I'se ay be there,
And be as canty's ony.

["This tune," says Burns, "is originally from the Highlands: I have heard a Gaelic song to it, which I was told was very clever, but not by any means a lady's song." The air, as well as the song, appeared for the first time in the Musical Museum: the second strain of this Highland tune bears a close resemblance to the second part of the tune of "Saw ye Johnnie coming."]

Ae fond Kiss.

Tune—*Rory Dall's Port.*

I.

AE fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, and then, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

II.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.—
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

III.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas! for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

["These exquisitely affecting stanzas," says Scott, "contain the essence of a thousand love tales." The last half of the second stanza furnished Lord Byron with a motto to the "Bride of Abydos" one of his most splendid Poems.

The song was inspired, it is believed, by the fair Clarinda, and is worthy of her wit, her talents, and her beauty. The stanzas have something of Thomson's feeling in them:—

"For ever, fortune, wilt thou prove,
An unrelenting foe to love;
And when we meet a mutual heart,
Step rudely in and bid us part;
Bid us sigh on from day to day,
And wish and wish the soul away;
Till youth and genial years are flown,
And all the life of love is gone?"]

Lovely Davies.

Tune—*Miss Muir.*

I.

O HOW shall I, unskilfu', try
The poet's occupation,
The tunefu' powers, in happy hours,
That whispers inspiration?
Even they maun dare an effort mair
Than aught they ever gave us,
Or they rehearse, in equal verse,
The charms o' lovely Davies.

II.

Each eye it cheers, when she appears,
Like Phœbus in the morning,
When past the show'r, and every flower
The garden is adorning.
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is;
Sae droops our heart when we maun part
Frae charming, lovely Davies.

III.

Her smile's a gift, frae 'boon the lift,
That maks us mair than princes;
A sceptred hand, a king's command,
Is in her darting glances:
The man in arms, 'gainst female charms,
Even he her willing slave is;
He hugs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering, lovely Davies.

IV.

My muse to dream of such a theme,
Her feeble pow'rs surrender;
The eagle's gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendour:
I wad in vain essay the strain,
The deed too daring brave is;
I'll drap the lyre, and mute, admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

[Most of Burns' heroines were handsome and witty. This song on "The charming lovely Davies" was written for the Museum.]

The weary Pund o' Tow.

Tune—*The weary Pund o' Tow.*

I.

I BOUGHT my wife a stane o' lint
As gude as e'er did grow;
And a' that she has made o' that
Is ae poor pund o' tow.

CHORUS.

The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow;
I think my wife will end her life
Before she spin her tow.

II.

There sat a bottle in a bole,
Beyont the ingle low,
And ay she took the tither souk,
To drouk the stowrie tow.

III.

Quoth I, for shame, ye dirty dame,
Gae spin your tap o' tow!
She took the rock, and wi' a knock
She brak it o'er my pow.

IV.

At last her feet—I sang to see't—
Gaed foremost o'er the knowe;
And or I wad anither jad,
I'll wallop in a tow.

The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow!
I think my wife will end her life
Before she spin her tow. *

* [Our Scottish ladies are never represented by the poets as unreasonably addicted to thrift: "a pund o' tow" is now a rare matter among the Scottish cottages; the rock has long since been banished from our fire-sides, and the wheel is about to follow. In another score of years a woman spinning will likely be a matter of wonder among the northern mountaineers. The idea of this song is old, and also the chorus. A few verses are here given as a sample:—

Come all ye jolly bachelors
That now would married be,
I pray you be advised,
And take this note frae me,
A single life is free frae strife,
And sorrow, grief, and woe,
Besides a wife to deave my life,
Wi' the weary pund o' tow.
The weary pund, &c.

But if ye'll be advised,
And warning take by me,
First ye'll try your sweet-heart,
And see what she can dee.
See gin she can scratch and card,
And milk baith cow and ewe,
And rock the cradle wi' her foot,
And spin the pund o' tow.

The town and city damsels,
They gang sae neat and fine,
In drinking tea and brandy,
Is a' that they incline.
And for to powder, patch, and paint,
And walk about the knowe,
Is a' their wark,—they'll rather die
Than spin the pund o' tow.

I hae a Wife o' my ain.

Tune—*Naebody.*

I.

I HAE a wife o' my ain—
I'll partake wi' naebody;
I'll tak cuckold frae nane,
I'll gie cuckold to naebody.
I hae a penny to spend,
There—thanks to naebody;
I hae naething to lend—
I'll borrow frae naebody.

II.

I am naebody's lord—
I'll be slave to naebody;
I hae a guid braid sword,
I'll tak dunts frae naebody;
I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for naebody;
If naebody care for me,
I'll care for naebody.

[This cheerful air was once encumbered with very idle verses; yet they contained the germ of this lively song by Burns; the following is an old verse:—

"I hae a wife o' my awn,
I'll be hadden to naebody;
I hae a pot and a pan,
I'll borrow frae naebody."

"The Poet was accustomed to say that the most happy period of his life was the first winter he spent at Ellisland, for the first time under a roof of his own, with his wife and children about him, and, in spite of occasional lapses into the melancholy which had haunted his youth, looking forward to a life of well-regulated, and not ill-rewarded, industry. It is known that he welcomed his wife to her roof-tree at Ellisland in the above song."—LOCKHART.]

O, for ane-and-twenty, Tam!

Tune—*The Moudiewort.*

CHORUS.

AN O, for and ane-and-twenty, Tam!
And hey, sweet ane-and-twenty, Tam!
I'll learn my kin a rattlin' sang,
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.

I.

THEY snool me sair, and haud me down,
And gar me look like bluntie, Tam;
But three short years will soon wheel roun'—
And then comes ane-and-twenty, Tam.

II.

A gleib o' lan', a claut o' gear,
Was left me by my auntie, Tam;
At kith or kin I need na spier,
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.

III.

They'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,
Tho' I mysel' hae plenty, Tam;
But hear'st thou, laddie—there's my loof—
I'm thine at ane-and-twenty, Tam.

An O for ane-and-twenty, Tam!
An hey, sweet ane-and-twenty, Tam!
I'll learn my kin a rattlin' sang,
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam. *

[The Poet, in his memoranda on the Museum, says simply, "This song is mine." It was composed on a story common to all countries; a young girl of rich expectations was pressed by her friends to "make mickle mair," and marry an old and wealthy wooer, in preference to one handsome and young, on whom she had placed her affections. The entreaties of her relations only hastened the catastrophe; she gave her hand and fortune to worthy Tam, as soon as twenty-one made her mistress of both.]

O, Kenmure's on and awa.

Tune—*O Kenmure's on and awa, Willie.*

I.

O KENMURE'S on and awa, Willie!
O Kenmure's on and awa!
And Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw.

II.

Success to Kenmure's band, Willie!
Success to Kenmure's band;
There's no a heart that fears a Whig,
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

III.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie!
Here's Kenmure's health in wine;
There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

* The tune to which this lively song was composed is old and good. The following are the words:—
I hae gotten a braw new gown,
And Jamie's gotten a waistcoat o't;
I bade the tailor gie me room,
Case Geordie bevil the body o't.
The moudiewort's a wylie beast,
A cunning wee beast the moudiewort;
I biggit my house at the fit o' yon brae,
And he crap in at the gavil o't.]

IV.

O Kenmure's lads are men, Willie!
O Kenmure's lads are men;
Their hearts and swords are metal true—
And that their faes shall ken.

V.

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie!
They'll live or die wi' fame;
But soon wi' sounding victorie,
May Kenmure's lord come hame!

VI.

Here's him that's far awa, Willie!
Here's him that's far awa!
And here's the flower that I lo'e best—
The rose that's like the snaw!

["It is difficult to determine whether to ascribe this song wholly to Burns, or to give to his pen only the second and third stanzas. That it is partly old I never heard doubted; and that it refers to the fortunes of the gallant Gordons of Kenmure, in the fatal "Fifteen," is quite evident. The Viscount left Galloway with two hundred horsemen well armed; he joined the other lowland Jacobites—penetrated to Preston—repulsed, and at last yielded to, the attack of General Carpenter—and perished on the scaffold. He was a good as well as a brave man, and his fate was deeply lamented. The title has since been restored to the "Gordon's line." Burns, as may be seen in his correspondence, was, once at least, an invited guest at Kenmure."—CUNNINGHAM.]

My Collier Laddie.

Tune—*The Collier Laddie.*

I.

O WHARE live ye, my bonnie lass?
An' tell me what they ca' ye?
My name, she says, is Mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier Laddie.
My name, she says, is Mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier Laddie.

II.

O see you not yon hills and dales,
The sun shines on sae brawlie!
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye leave your Collier Laddie.
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

III.

And ye shall gang in gay attire,
Weel buskit up sae gaudy;
And ane to wait at every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.
And ane to wait at every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

IV.

Tho' ye had a' the sun shines on,
And the earth conceals sae lowly;
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier Laddie.
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier Laddie.

V.

I can win my five pennies a day,
And spen 't at night fu' brawlie;
And mak my bed in the Collier's neuk,
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.
And mak my bed in the Collier's neuk,
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.

VI.

Luve for luve is the bargain for me,
Tho' the wee cot-house should haud me;
And the warld before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie.
And the warld before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie. *

---

* Burns says, "I do not know a blither *old* song than this." When Burns sent this song to the Museum, he sent it as an *old* song,—some few words altered by himself: in proof of which we here give the original:—

I hae been east, I hae been west,
And I've been at Kirkaldie;
But the bonniest lass that e'er I saw
Was following a collier laddie.

Wi' siller slippers on her feet,
Her body neat and handsome,
And sky blue ribbons on her head,
Where gowd aboon was glancin.

Whaur are ye gaun, my bonnie lass?
Come tell me how they ca' thee;
My name it's Jane, the maid replied,
I'm following my collier laddie.

O would ye fancy ane that's black,
And you sae fair and gawdie?
O fancy ane o' higher degree
Than follow a collier laddie.

I'll gie you ha's, I'll gie you bowers,
I'll gie you gowd rings gawdie,
I'll gie you gowd laid up in store,
To leave your collier laddie.

I value not your ha's and bowers,
Nor yet your gowd rings gawdie;
Nor a' the gowd ye hae in store,—
I'll keep my collier laddie.

I wantna ha's, I wantna bowers,
I wantna gowd rings gawdie;
I'll make my bed in's kitchen nook,
And lie wi' my collier laddie.

Then he's gane to her father dear,
To her father sae gawdie;
Says,—will ye gie me your bonny lass
That's following the collier laddie?

O would she marry a man that's black,
And me sae braw and gawdie?
I'd raise her up to a higher degree
Than following a collier laddie.

Her father dear then vow'd and sware,
Tho' he be black, he's bonny;
She's mair delight in him, I fear,
Than you, wi' a' your money.

When seven years were come and gane,
And seven years sae gawdie,
The gentleman came riding by,
To see Jane's collier laddie.

Nithsdale's Welcome Hame.

I.

THE noble Maxwells and the powers,
Are coming o'er the border,
And they'll gae big Terreagle's towers,
An' set them a' in order.
And they declare Terreagle's fair,
For their abode they chuse it;
There's no a heart in a' the land
But's lighter at the news o't.

II.

Tho' stars in skies may disappear,
And angry tempests gather;
The happy hour may soon be near
That brings us pleasant weather:
The weary night o' care and grief
May hae a joyfu' morrow;
So dawning day has brought relief—
Fareweel our night o' sorrow!

[The Maxwells were once the most powerful family in all the south of Scotland. The family rose on the fall of the great house of Douglas: a feud with the Annandale Johnstons cost them three earls: the wars of Charles and his Parliament were very injurious—the rebellion of 1786 deprived them of the title—and the truly noble name is no longer numbered with our nobility. Terreagles-house stands at the foot of a fine range of green and lofty hills: it was built in the days of the Poet, and to this the song alludes. The music was by Robert Riddel, Esq., of Glenriddel.]

Lines on a merry Ploughman.

As I was a wand'ring ae morning in spring,
I heard a merry ploughman sae sweetly to sing;
And as he was singin' thae words he did say,
'There's nae life like the Ploughman in the month o' sweet May.—
The lav'rock in the morning she'll rise frae her nest,
And mount to the air wi' the dew on her breast;*
And wi' the merry Ploughman she'll whistle and sing;
And at night she'll return to her nest back again.

[This beautiful fragment was printed in Cromek's Reliques, from the original MS. in Burns' own writing. Gilbert Burns says, "the verses are not my brother's, but were sung by every ploughman and ploughman's mistress in Ayr-shire before he was born." They are, however, again reproduced in Hogg and Motherwell's Edition of the Works of the Poet, and we have not thought it right to exclude them from the present Edition.]

As I was a-wand'ring.

Tune—*Rinn M'eudial mo Mhealladh.—A Gaelic Air.*

I.

As I was a-wand'ring ae midsummer e'enin',
The pipers and youngsters were makin' their game;
Amang them I spied my faithless fause lover,
Which bled a' the wound o' my dolour again.
Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him;
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain;
I'll flatter my fancy I may get anither,
My heart it shall never be broken for ane.

II.

I couldna get sleeping till dawin for greetin',
The tears trickl'd down like the hail and the rain:
Had I na got greetin', my heart wad a broken,
For, oh! luve forsaken's a tormenting pain!

O hae ye money to lend, fair maid?
Hae ye money sae gawdie?
For gin I e'er come this road again,
I'll pay your collier laddie.

Where are your ha's?—where are your bowers
Where are your rings sae gawdie?
Where's a' the gowd ye promis'd me,
To forsake my collier laddie?

I wantna ha's, I wantna bowers,
I wantna rings sae gawdie;
I wantna gowd and money to lend,
Still kept my collier laddie.

Now she is to her father gane,
To her father dear sae gawdie,
Says,—the thing ye promis'd me langsyne,
Gie't to my collier laddie.

Then he tauld down ten thousand crowns,
Ten thousand crowns sae gawdie,
Says, take ye that, my daughter Jane,
Enjoy your collier laddie.

The heroine of this song was Jane Cochrane, daughter to the laird of Bohill, near Kelso; and the hero of the piece was Mr. Presley, proprietor of a very extensive coal work in that neighbourhood. The song is very old. Another ballad called the "Collier's Bonny Lassie," may be found in Ramsay's Tea Table Miscellany.]

* [It is pleasing to mark those touches of sympathy which show the sons of genius to be of one kindred. In the following passage from the poem of his countryman, the same figure is illustrated with characteristic simplicity; and never were the tender and the sublime of poetry more happily united, nor a more affectionate tribute paid to the memory of Burns:

——"Thou, simple bird,
Of all the vocal quire, dwell'st in a home
The humblest; yet thy morning song ascends
Nearest to heaven;—sweet emblem of his song,†
Who sung thee wakening by the daisy's side!"

Grahame's Birds of Scotland, vol. ii. p. iv.]

† Burns.

III.

Although he has left me for greed o' the siller,
I dinna envy him the gains he can win;
I rather wad bear a' the lade o' my sorrow
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.
Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him,
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain;
I'll flatter my fancy I may get anither,
My heart it shall never be broken for ane.

[The air to which these affecting words were written is good old Highland, and the title means, "My love did deceive me." It was found by Burns during his last northern tour, and found—as all Gaelic melodies are—accompanied by verse. The original was rendered into English by an Inverness-shire lady, and from her version he composed these stanzas. They were printed in the fourth volume of the Musical Museum.]

Bess and her Spinning-Wheel.

Tune—*The sweet Lass that lo'es me.*

I.

O LEEZE me on my spinning-wheel,
And leeze me on my rock and reel;
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And haps me fiel and warm at e'en!
I'll set me down and sing and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun,
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal—
O leeze me on my spinning-wheel!

II.

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below my theekit cot;
The scented birk and hawthorn white,
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
And little fishes' caller rest:
The sun blinks kindly in the biel',
Where blithe I turn my spinning-wheel.

III.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
And echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays:
The craik amang the clover hay,
The paitrick whirrin o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin round my shiel,
Amuse me at my spinning-wheel.

IV.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,
O wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their flaring, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessy at her spinning-wheel?

["The melody to which Burns composed those verses was written by Oswald. The theme is a favourite one with the Poet—virtue and thrift. The heroine rejoices in her rustic independence; her wheel and reel are her truest friends, and clothe her and fill her cottage with comforts. Nor is she insensible to rural loveliness; her house stands among trotting streams; and birds sing and cushats wail on the bushes and trees around her. Machinery has stopt the spinning-wheel, and taken the distaff from the bosoms of our lasses; on the rivulet side, now, no white-armed girls sing as they lave water on yarn of their own making—a shining and glossy grey,

'Which glanc'd in a' our lads' een.'

as they walked kirk-ward."—CUNNINGHAM.]

O Luve will venture in.

Tune—*The Posie.*

I.

O LUVE will venture in
Where it daurna weel be seen;
O luve will venture in
Where wisdom ance has been;
But I will down yon river rove,
Amang the wood sae green—
And a' to pu' a posie
To my ain dear May.

II.

The primrose I will pu',
The firstling of the year;
And I will pu' the pink,
The emblem o' my dear;
For she's the pink o' womankind,
And blooms without a peer—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

III.

I'll pu' the budding rose,
When Phœbus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss
O' her sweet, bonnie mou';
The hyacinth's for constancy,
Wi' its unchanging blue—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May

IV.

The lily it is pure,
And the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom
I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity,
And unaffected air—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

V.

The hawthorn I will pu',
Wi' its locks o' siller gray,
Where, like an aged man,
It stands at break of day.
But the songster's nest within the bush
I winna tak away—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

VI.

The woodbine I will pu',
When the ev'ning star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew
Shall be her een sae clear;
The violet's for modesty,
Which weel she fa's to wear—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

VII.

I'll tie the posie round,
Wi' the silken band of love,
And I'll place it in her breast,
And I'll swear, by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life
The band shall ne'er remove—
And this will be a posie
To my ain dear May.*

Countrie Lassie.

Tune—*The Country Lass.*

I.

In simmer, when the hay was mawn,
And corn wav'd green in ilka field,
While claver blooms white o'er the lea,
And roses blaw in ilka bield;

* [Similar sentiments to those of Burns inspired Meleager in his "Heliodora's Garland," thus translated by Professor Wilson:

"I'll twine white violets, with soft myrtles too,
Narcissus twine, hyacinth of purple hue,
Twine with sweet crocus, laughing lilies twine
With roses, that to lovers hopeful shine;
So that on Heliodora's perfumed head
A wreath her beauteous ringlets may flower-spread."

"The feeling of the Greek lines," says Wilson, "is tender, and the expression perfect; but we cannot say more of the feeling than that it is a natural tenderness, inspired by the mingled breath of Heliodora and her garland. The tenderness is mixed, too, it may be said, with pride and homage. Meleager does the thing gracefully; we see his figure in an imposing posture, as he fixes the wreath on her head. But compare the courtier with the peasant—Meleager with Burns. By the banks of every stream in Coila hath bold bright Bobby walked, with his arm round some sweetheart's waist, and helped her to pull the primrose or the hawthorn,

'In many a secret place,
Where rivulets danc'd their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Did pass into her face.'

"The Scot surpasses the Greek in poetry as well as passion—his tenderness is more heartfelt—his expression is even more exquisite; for the most consummate art, even when guided by genius, cannot refine and burnish, by repeated polishing, the best selected words, up to the breathing beauty that, warm from the fount of inspiration, sometimes colours the pure language of nature.

"Lady! we appeal to thee—while we place THE POSIE on thy bosom.

"In one of Mr. Merivale's notes—always so agreeable—allusion is made to Dr. Aikin's 'Essay on the application of Natural History to Poetry'—where he censures Pope for having in his Pastorals represented two flowers as blowing at the same time, when some months in reality intervene between the periods of their flowering;

'Here, the bright crocus and the violet grow;
Here western winds on breathing roses blow.'

We have never seen the Doctor's Essay, but do not doubt the excellence of his prescription. 'Every flowery versifier,' he says, 'has materials at hand for a lover's bower; but a botanist alone could have culled and sorted the plants which compose the Bower of Eve.' Poo-poo-poo. Milton was no botanist. Poets of course observe all natural phenomena; when they wish to be accurate they generally are so; and ignorance is unpardonable on all occasions where they profess to write according to knowledge. But feeling often forgets facts. Meleager gathers flowers for his Heliodora that are all naturally in blossom together, and it is well; but Burns pu'd a posie for his own dear May, in despite of the Seasons and Dr. Aikin. He was as good a botanist as Milton—that is, no botanist at all—but he knew every month by its flower. Nevertheless, his own dear May, more magical than even the month of that name, to his eyes covered the earth at once with all the flowers of the year. As all the innocences were alive in her, so to his imagination were all their emblems in nature. The primrose—the firstling of the year—as he most tenderly calls it—the pink, which comes long after—the rose, which in Scotland at least is 'newly born in June'—the hawthorn, seldom 'siller grey' before July—and the violet earlier far than the lily—though Heaven forbid the lily should be wanting—all are pu'd by the ploughman for one Posie, that in its profusion and confusion of balm and bloom, shall faintly but faithfully image his own dear May. Enough that both she and they were innocent and beautiful in the breath of Heaven. Nor is that all. He mingles the hours of the day as well as the seasons of the year.

'I'll pu' the budding rose when Phœbus peeps in view'—

an image of the dewy dawn; but from morn to dewy eve is but a moment in 'love's young dream,' and, forgetful of the simplest and easiest chronology, he declares,

'The woodbine I will pu' when the evening star is near!'

We could expatiate for an hour on this Posie; but the hint we have dropped is sufficient to settle Dr. Aikin."

Another version of this beautiful lyric appeared above thirty years ago, set to music, and was afterwards printed in the Harp of Caledonia; it exhibits many variations, and was no doubt the poet's first draught. It is here subjoined:—

O luve will venture in whar it daurna well be seen;
O luve will venture in whar wisdom ance has been;
But I will down yon river rove, amang the leaves sae green,
And a' to pu' a posie for my ain dear Jean.

The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear,
I'll join the scented birk to the breathing eglantine,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear Jean.

I'll pu' the budding rose, when Phœbus peeps in view,
The morning's fragrance breathing like her sweet bonnie mou;
The hyacinth, of constancy the symbol shall be seen,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear Jean.

I'll pu' the lily pure, that adorns the dewy vale,
The richly blooming hawthorn, that scents the vernal gale,
The daisy for simplicity, and unaffected mien,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear Jean.

The woodbine I will pu' when the e'ening star is near,
Gemm'd wi' diamond drops o' dew, like her twa e'en sae clear,
The violet all modesty, the odour-breathing bean,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear Jean.

I'll tie the posie round with the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her bosom, and I'll pray the powers above
That to our latest breath o' life the band may aye remain,
And this will be a posie to my ain dear Jean.]

Blithe Bessie in the milking shiel,
Says—I'll be wed, come o't what will;
Out spak a dame in wrinkled eild—
O' guid advisement comes nae ill.

II.

It's ye hae wooers mony ane,
And, lassie, ye're but young, ye ken;
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale,
A routhie but, a routhie ben:
There's Johnnie o' the Buskie-glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;
Tak this frae me, my bonnie hen,
It's plenty beets the luver's fire.

III.

For Johnnie o' the Buskie-glen,
I dinna care a single flie;
He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye,
He has nae luve to spare for me:
But blithe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear:
Ae blink o' him I wad na gie
For Buskie-glen and a' his gear.

IV.

O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught;
The canniest gate, the strife is sair:
But ay fu' han't is fechtin best,
An hungry care's an unco care:
But some will spend, and some will spare,
An' wilfu' folk maun hae their will;
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill.

V.

O, gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye;
But the tender heart o' leesome luve,
The gowd and siller canna buy;
We may be poor—Robie and I,
Light is the burden luve lays on;
Content and luve bring peace and joy—
What mair hae queens upon a throne?

["In the present song, a dame of wrinkled eild takes upon her the duty of monitress, and it cannot be said that she fails to make out a capital case in favour of a prudent match; she asserts, with the wooer in Allan Ramsay,—

"There's mickle true love in bands and bags,
And gowd an' siller's a sweet complexion."

The Poet has made a liberal use of proverb lore; the fourth verse consists wholly of warning saws and antique sayings; the grey dame who uses them makes happiness of the household of Mammon. In former times, before money was plentiful, it is said that a wooer waded the Nith to the Isle beside Ellisland, and made an offer for the hand of a farmer's daughter: the young woman received his addresses with a sort of sarcastic coldness; her father approached, and rounded in her ear, 'Look at him twice, Jenny; look at him twice—he's weel arrayed—he has twa tap-coats and a plaid on!"—CUNNINGHAM.]

Fair Eliza.

A Gaelic Air.

I.

TURN again, thou fair Eliza,
Ae kind blink before we part,
Rue on thy despairing lover!
Canst thou break his faithfu' heart?
Turn again, thou fair Eliza;
If to love thy heart denies,
For pity hide the cruel sentence
Under friendship's kind disguise!

II.

Thee, dear maid, hae I offended?
The offence is loving thee:
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever
Wha for thine wad gladly die?
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt mix in ilka throe;
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow.

III.

Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sunny noon;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon;
Not the poet, in the moment
Fancy lightens in his e'e,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture,
That thy presence gies to me.

["The original title of this song was 'Fair Rabina:' the heroine was a young lady to whom one of the Poet's friends was attached, and Burns wrote it in compliment to his passion. Johnson, the proprietor of the Museum, disliked the name, and, desiring to have one more suitable for singing, the Poet unwillingly changed it to Eliza. Burns thought very well of the composition, and said he had tasked his muse to the top of her performing. It is to be regretted that this change took place: it was something of a fraud, for it robbed the fair Rabina of an honour of which any one might be justly covetous, and bestowed it upon a shadowy dame of the fancy."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Ye Jacobites by Name.

Tune—*Ye Jacobites by Name*

I.

YE jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear;
Ye jacobites by name, give an ear;
Ye jacobites by name,
Your fautes I will proclaim,
Your doctrines I maun blame—
You shall hear.

II.
What is right, and what is wrang, by the law,
by the law?
What is right, and what is wrang, by the law?
What is right, and what is wrang?
A short sword, and a lang,
A weak arm, and a strang
For to draw.

III.
What makes heroic strife, fam'd afar, fam'd afar?
What makes heroic strife, fam'd afar?
What makes heroic strife?
To whet th' assassin's knife,
Or hunt a parent's life
Wi' bluidie war.

IV.
Then let your schemes alone, in the state, in the
state;
Then let your schemes alone in the state;
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone
To his fate.

[Burns founded this song on some old verses, in which it was intimated that the extinction of the House of Stuart was sought for by other weapons than the sword. It cannot be denied that, if the House of Hanover had the affection of the people and the law of the land on their side, the exiled princes had the best poetry. This may be accounted for: the romantic adventures, and daring exploits, and deep sufferings of Prince Charles enlisted sympathy on his side; and the minstrels, regarding his fate and that of his brave companions as furnishing matter for poetry only, sung with a pathos and a force which will likely be long remembered. It would seem by the last verse that Burns looked upon the cause as hopeless. The air is very popular.—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Banks of Doon.

FIRST VERSION.

I.
YE flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

II
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true.

III.
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

IV.
Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its love;
And sae did I o' mine.

V.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Frae off its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

[Cromek, who had a fine taste in poetry and art, found this version among the letters of the Poet, and admitted it into the Reliques. Whenever the genius of Burns was a topic of conversation, he loved to descant on the exquisite simplicity and force of his sentiments and language, and generally instanced the last two verses of the first version of the "Banks of Doon" as a fine specimen of his natural powers.]

The Banks o' Doon.

SECOND VERSION.

Tune—*Caledonian Hunt's Delight.*

I.
YE banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return!

II.
Oft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver stole my rose,
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

[The history of the air to which the "Banks o' Doon" was composed is curious. It happened that James Miller, a writer in Edinburgh, was in company with Stephen Clarke the musician: the conversation turned upon the beauty of the Scottish airs, when Miller declared he would like much to make one. Clarke, in a jocular way, told him that nothing was more easy—he had only to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord—preserve some kind of rhythm—and the result would be a true Scottish air. What the musician meant for a joke, Miller took seriously. To the harpsichord he went, and applied his fingers with such success to the black keys that he speedily produced his tune,

which, on receiving two or three touches from Clarke, was given to the world—and with such applause that Burns re-modelled his "Banks and Braes o' bonnie Doon," and adapted it to the air—at the expense somewhat of its simplicity.

An Ayr-shire legend says that the heroine of this affecting song was Miss Kennedy of Dalgarrock, a young creature, beautiful and accomplished, who fell a victim to her love for M'Douall of Logan. All the earlier songs of Burns were founded in truth. (See an interesting letter to Gavin Hamilton, Esq., dated Edinburgh, March 9th, 1787, given exclusively in this Edition.)]

Sic a wife as Willie had.

Tune—*The eight Men of Moidart.*

I.

Willie Wastle dwalt on Tweed,
The spot they ca'd it Linkum-doddie,
Willie was a wabster guid,
Cou'd stown a clue wi' onie bodie:
He had a wife was dour and din,
O Tinkler Maidgie was her mither;
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad nae gie a button for her.

II.

She has an e'e—she has but ane,
The cat has twa the very colour;
Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump,
A clapper-tongue wad deave a miller;
A whiskin' beard about her mou',
Her nose and chin they threaten ither—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad nae gie a button for her

III.

She's bow hough'd, she's hem shinn'd,
Ae limpin' leg, a hand-breed shorter;
She's twisted right, she's twisted left,
To balance fair in ilka quarter:
She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad nae gie a button for her.

IV.

Auld baudrans by the ingle sits,
An' wi' her loof her face a-washin';
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,
She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion;
Her walie nieves like midden-creels,
Her face wad fyle the Logan-Water—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

["The hero of this song owes his name perhaps to that doughty personage who replied to the summons of Oliver Cromwell:—

'I'm Willie o' the Wastle,
I'll keep in my castle;
An' a' the dogs in your town
Shanna ding me down.'

"The heroine is said to have been a much humbler individual; namely, the wife of a farmer who lived near Burns at Ellisland. She was a very singular woman: tea, she said, would be the ruin of the nation; sugar was a sore evil; wheaten bread was only fit for babes; earthenware was a pickpocket; wooden floors were but fit for threshing upon; slated roofs, cold; feathers, good enough for fowls; in short, she abhorred change, and, whenever any thing new appeared, such as harrows with iron teeth—'Aye, aye,' she would exclaim, 'ye'll see the upshot!'

"Of all modern things she disliked china most; she called it 'burnt clay,' and said it was only fit for 'hauding the broo o' stinking weeds,' as she called tea. On one occasion, a southern dealer in cups and saucers asked so much for his ware that he exasperated a peasant, who said 'I canna purchase, but I ken ane that will:' 'Gang there,' said he, pointing to the house of Willie's wife:—'dinna be blate or burd-mouthed; ask a gude penny—she has the siller.' Away went the poor dealer, spread out his wares before her, and summed up all by asking a double price. A blow from her cummock was his instant reward, which not only fell on his person, but damaged his china—'I'll learn ye,' quoth she, as she heard the saucers jingle, 'to come with yere brazent English face, and yere bits o' burnt clay to me!' She was an unlovely dame—her daughters, however, were beautiful."—Cunningham.]

Lady Mary Ann.

Tune—*Craigston's growing.*

I.

O, Lady Mary Ann
Looks o'er the castle wa',
She saw three bonnie boys
Playing at the ba';
The youngest he was
The flower amang them a'—
My bonnie laddie's young,
But he's growin' yet.

II.

O father! O father!
An ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year
To the college yet:
We'll sew a green ribbon
Round about his hat,
And that will let them ken
He's to marry yet.

III.

Lady Mary Ann
Was a flower i' the dew,
Sweet was its smell,
And bonnie was its hue;
And the langer it blossom'd
The sweeter it grew;
For the lily in the bud
Will be bonnier yet.

IV.

Young Charlie Cochrane
Was the sprout of an aik;
Bonnie and bloomin'
And straught was its make:
The sun took delight
To shine for its sake,
And it will be the brag
O' the forest yet.

V.

The simmer is gane
When the leaves they were green,
And the days are awa
That we hae seen;
But far better days
I trust will come again,
For my bonnie laddie's young,
But he's growin' yet. *

[" The third and fourth verses of this song are in the happiest manner of Burns. An old ballad, called "Craigton's growing," was chanted to him in one of his Highland excursions: he caused the tune to be noted down, and, musing over the old rhyme, produced "Lady Mary Ann," and sent both music and words to the Museum. During the short career of Burns, he did much for the lyrical glory of Scotland; wherever he went, his ear was open to the music of the district, and to the local songs of the land. He communicated many airs to Johnson, and on all occasions displayed a sympathy for music which showed how much he was under its influence. Music is cultivated, during the winter time, among the peasantry of Scotland, and psalmody is taught along with the native lyrics. All the youth, too, are instructed in dancing; few natives of the north can be found who are ignorant of music and dancing."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Fareweel to a' our Scottish Fame.

Tune—*Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation.*

I.

FAREWEEL to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory!
Fareweel even to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story!
Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands,
And Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

II.

What force or guile could not subdue,
Thro' many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
For hireling traitors' wages.
The English steel we could disdain,
Secure in valour's station;
But English gold has been our bane—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

III.

O would, or I had seen the day
That treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.†

* We subjoin a traditional copy of the old ballad:—

MY BONNIE LADDIE'S LANG O' GROWING

The trees they are ivied, the leaves they are green,
The days are a' awa that I hae seen,
On the cauld winter nights I ha'e to lie my lane,
For my bonnie laddie's lang o' growing.

O father dear, you have done me great wrong,
You have wedded me to a boy that's too young,
He is scarce twelve, and I'm but thirteen,
And my bonnie laddie's lang o' growing.

O daughter dear, I have done you no wrong,
I have wedded you to a noble lord's son,
He'll be the lord, and ye'll wait on,
And your bonnie laddie's daily growing.

O father dear, if you think it fit,
We'll send him to the college a year or twa yet;
We'll tie a green ribbon round about his hat,
And that will be a token that he's married.

And O father dear, if this pleaseth you,
I will cut my hair aboon my brow:
Coat, vest, and breeches I will put on,
And I to the college will go wi' him.

She's made him shirts o' the Holland sae fine,
And wi' her ain hands she sewed the same;
And aye the tears came trickling down,
Saying, my bonnie laddie's lang o' growing.

In his twelfth year he was a married man,
And in his thirteenth he had his auld son,
And in his fourteenth his grave it was green,
Sae that put an end to his growing.

† ["Burns," says Cunningham, "has expressed sentiments in this song which were once popular in the north. The advantages of an union which deprived Scotland of all the visible symbols of power and independence, were not for forty years at least perceived by the people: they only saw the mansions of their nobles empty, grass growing in the Parliament close, and felt that the little wealth which belonged to the land was flowing off to the south. Those whom the Union allured to London were made to feel their dependent condition more keenly: they were received with suspicion and distrust by a proud and haughty people; they were treated as foreigners, rather than as men who visited their own capital. England, like the termagant dame in the Poet's verse, allowed her spouse to have "no will but by her high permission." A rebellion, conducted by a weak and

The Carle of Kellyburn Braes.

Tune—*Kellyburn Braes.*

I.

THERE lived a carle in Kellyburn braes,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme;)
And he had a wife was the plague o' his days;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

II.

Ae day as the carle gaed up the lang glen,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
He met wi' the devil; says, "How do yow fen?"
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

III.

"I've got a bad wife, sir; that's a' my complaint;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

IV.

"It's neither your stot nor your staig I shall crave,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

V.

"O! welcome, most kindly," the blythe carle said,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
"But if ye can match her, ye're waur than ye're ca'd,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in [prime."

VI.

The devil has got the auld wife on his back;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
And, like a poor pedlar, he's carried his pack;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

VII.

He's carried her hame to his ain hallan-door;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
Syne bade her gae in, for a b— and a w—,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

VIII.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
Turn out on her guard in the clap of a hand;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

IX.

The carlin gaed thro' them like ony wud bear,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
Whae'er she gat hands on cam near her nae mair;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

X.

A reekit wee devil looks over the wa';
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
"O, help, master, help! or she'll ruin us a',
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

XI.

The devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
He pitied the man that was ty'd to a wife;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

XII.

The devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
He was not in wedlock, thank heav'n, but in hell;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in [prime.

XIII.

Then Satan has travell'd again wi' his pack;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
And to her auld husband he's carried her back;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

XIV.

"I hae been a devil the feck o' my life;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
But ne'er was in hell, till I met wi' a wife;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

[When Cromek desired Mrs. Burns to inform him respecting the songs which her husband had eked out or amended in the Museum, she ran her finger, he said, along the pages, saying

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wavering chief, which caused the scaffolds to reek with blood, and provoked England, made matters worse; nor was it till a handful of desperate men shook the throne of Britain in two triumphant battles, and advancing to Derby,

"With fear of change perplexed monarchs,"

that Scotchmen were allowed to have the benefit of an union which had been forced upon them. The Poet, who loved Scotland as his own heart's blood, in musing upon the profligate sellers and buyers of his country, indignantly sung—

"We're bought and sold for English gold—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!"

"Alas!" he exclaimed, "have I often said to myself, what are all the advantages which my country reaps from the Union that can counterbalance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name? Nothing can reconcile me to the terms, '*English* Ambassador,' '*English* Court,' &c."

"Nor has Scott written less strongly, when speaking of northern statesmen.—'When they united with the degradation of their country the prospect of obtaining personal wealth and private emoluments, we cannot acquit them of the charge of having sold their own honour and that of Scotland.'—'I have already mentioned,' he elsewhere says, 'the sum of twenty thousand pounds, which was apportioned to the commissioners who originally laid the basis of the treaty. I may add there was another sum of twenty thousand pounds employed to secure to the measures of the Court the party called the Squadróne Volante. The account of the mode in which this last sum was distributed has been published: and it may be doubted whether the descendants of the noble lords and honourable gentlemen who accepted this gratification would be more shocked at the general fact of their ancestors being corrupted, or scandalized at the paltry amount of the bribe. One noble lord accepted so low a sum as eleven guineas: and the bargain was the more hard, as he threw his religion into the bargain, and from Catholic turned Protestant, to make his vote a good one.'"]

"Robert gae this ane a brushing; and this ane gat a brushing also." But when she came to the "Carle of Kellyburn Braes," she exclaimed, "He gae this ane a terrible brushing." The skeleton, so to speak, of the song is old: but, like a crab-stock, it has been compelled to bear a richer fruit than pertains to its original nature. The emendations and additions by Burns are numerous; the eleventh and twelfth verses are wholly his; entire lines, half-lines, and sometimes a line and a half from his pen.

Other versifiers have tried their hands on the subject, and the result is sundry additional verses wearing the hue and impressed with the character of the old strain. Satan carries the carlin to his "lowing heugh:"—

"He clinkit her down in his mickle arm chair,
(Hey! and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
And thousands o' devils cam round her to stare;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

But aye as they at the auld carlin play'd pou't,
(Hey! and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
She gied them a bang and she lent them a clout;
And the time it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

The stir which she makes excites something like a civil war in hell; and the devil, afraid of the stability of his empire, seizes the carlin, and, carrying her suddenly to upper air, finds her husband at the plough, cheering himself with a song:—

"And aye as the auld carle ranted and sang,
(Hey! and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
In troth, my auld Spankie, ye'll no keep her lang;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

On observing Satan advancing, the poor man looked sad, and hoped he was not bringing her back: Clootie makes answer:—

"I tried her in spunks, and in cauldrons I tried her,
(Hey! and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
The wale of my brimstane wadna hae fried her;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

I stapped her into the neuk o' my den,
(Hey! and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme,)
But the very damned ran when the carlins gaed ben;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."]

Jockey's ta'en the Parting Kiss.

Tune—*Bonnie Lassie, tak a Man.*

I.

JOCKEY'S ta'en the parting kiss,
O'er the mountains he is gane;
And with him is a' my bliss,
Nought but griefs with me remain,
Spare my luve, ye winds that blaw,
Plashy sleets and beating rain!
Spare my luve, thou feathery snaw,
Drifting o'er the frozen plain!

II.

When the shades of evening creep
O'er the day's fair, gladsome e'e,
Sound and safely may he sleep,
Sweetly blithe his waukening be!
He will think on her he loves,
Fondly he'll repeat her name;
For where'er he distant roves,
Jockey's heart is still at hame.

This charming song was written by Burns for the Museum. It is adapted to an ancient air, which is preserved in Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion. The old song is supposed to be now lost.

Coming through the Braes o' Cupar.

I.

DONALD Brodie met a lass,*
Coming o'er the braes o' Cupar;
Donald wi' his Highland hand,†
Rifled ilka charm about her.‡

CHORUS.

Coming o'er the braes o' Cupar,
Coming o'er the braes o' Cupar,
Highland Donald met a lass,
And row'd his Highland plaid about her.

II.

Weel I wat she was a quean,
Wad made a bodie's mouth to water;
Our Mess John, wi' his auld grey pow, §
His haly lips wad licket at her.

III.

Off she started in a fright,
And through the braes as she could bicker;
But souple Donald quicker flew,
And in his arms he lock'd her sicker.

Coming through the braes o' Cupar,
Coming through the braes o' Cupar,
Highland Donald met a lass,
And row'd his Highland plaid about her.

Lady Onlie.

Tune—*Ruffian's Rant.*

I.

A' THE lads o' Thornie-bank,
When they gae to the shore o' Bucky,
They'll step in an' tak' a pint
Wi' Lady Onlie, honest Lucky!

Lady Onlie, honest Lucky,
Brews guid ale at shore o' Bucky;
I wish her sale for her guid ale,
The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.

* VAR.—I met a lass, a bonnie lass.
† VAR.—Bare her leg, and bright her een,
‡ VAR.—And handsome ilka bit about her.
§ VAR.—Wi' his lyart pow.

II.

Her house sae bien, her curch sae clean,
I wat she is a dainty chucky;
And cheerlie blinks the ingle-gleed
Of Lady Onlie, honest Lucky!
Lady Onlie, honest Lucky,
Brews guid ale at shore o' Bucky;
I wish her sale for her guid ale,
The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.

[Some portion of "Lady Onlie" is old. Burns, in the language of his wife, gave it "a brushing" for the Museum. Other verses have made their appearance since:—

"Her foaming ale, her mirthsome tale,
A kiss at times, when things are lucky;
The mirk, mirk hours she lends them wings,
Guid Lady Onlie, honest Lucky."

Her drink is strong, her lips are sweet,
I taste them as I go to Buckie;
'Sic things maun be, if we sell ale,'
Quo' Lady Onlie, honest Lucky."

The last line save one is proverbial with those who frequent alehouses. The rustic muse loved to lay the scenes of her songs where

"Ale and wine are stars and moon!"

The wife of Whittlecockpen seems to have been full cousin to "Lady Onlie, honest Lucky:" her merits are set forth in some very graphic verses:—

"There dwalt a wife in Whittlecockpen,
And she brewed gude ale for gentlemen;
Ae night the dame her barm had set,
When a stranger man cam rap to the yett;
The night dang down baith win' an' weet,
The ale was strang, and the dame was sweet."]

The Chevalier's Lament.

Tune—*Captain O'Kean.*

I.

THE small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet winds clear thro' the vale;
The hawthorn trees blow, in the dew of the morning,
And wild scattered cowslips bedeck the green dale:
But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
While the lingering moments are number'd by care?
No flow'rs gaily springing, nor birds sweetly singing,
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

II.

The deed that I dared, could it merit their malice,
A king, and a father, to place on his throne?
His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I can find none:
But 'tis not my sufferings thus wretched, forlorn,
My brave gallant friends! 'tis your ruin I mourn;
Your deeds prov'd so loyal in hot-bloody trial—
Alas! can I make you no sweeter return?

[Yesterday," says Burns to Cleghorn, "as I was riding through a tract of melancholy, joyless moors, between Galloway and Ayr-shire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, 'Captain O'Kean,' coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it. I am tolerably pleased with the verses; but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music." Cleghorn answered that the words delighted him, and fitted the tune exactly. "I wish," added he, "that you would send me a verse or two more; and, if you have no objection, I would have it in the Jacobite style.—Suppose it should be sung after the fatal field of Culloden, by the unfortunate Charles." The Poet took his friend's advice, and infused a Jacobite spirit into the first verse as well as the second.]

War Song

Air—*Oran an Doig*; or, *The Song of Death.*

Scene—A field of battle. Time of the day, evening. The wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following song:

I.

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the broad setting sun! [ties!
Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear tender
Our race of existence is run!

II.

Thou grim king of terrors, thou life's gloomy foe!
Go, frighten the coward and slave! [know,
Go teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but
No terrors hast thou to the brave!

III.

Thou strik'st the dull peasant,—he sinks in the dark,
Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name;—
Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious mark!
He falls in the blaze of his fame!

IV.

In the field of proud honour—our swords in our hands,
Our king and our country to save—
While victory shines on life's last ebbing sands,
Oh! who would not die with the brave!

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* VAR.—The primroses blush.

[When Burns composed this noble lyric, he wrote, on the 17th of December, 1791, to Mrs. Dunlop:—"I have just finished the following song, which, to a lady, the descendant of Wallace—and many heroes of his truly illustrious line—and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology." The Poet, after transcribing the song, goes on to say that it was suggested to him on looking over Macdonald's collection of Highland airs, where he found an Isle of Sky tune, entitled "Oran an Doig, or the Song of Death," to the measure of which he adapted these heart-stirring verses.

Of this song, Currie says it is worthy of the Grecian muse—when Greece was most distinguished for genius and valour. Burns wished to print the lyric by itself, and give it to his country: unluckily some one advised him against it, and the Poet lived to be sorry that he yielded to his entreaty.]

Afton Water.

Tune—*The Yellow-haired Laddie.*

I.

Flow gently, sweet Afton! among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

II.

Thou stock-dove, whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den;
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

III.

How lofty, sweet Afton! thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

IV.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow!
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

V.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides!
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides!
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave!

VI.

Flow gently, sweet Afton! among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton! disturb not her dream.

["The copy of 'Afton Water,' was presented by the Poet to his kind and accomplished patroness, Mrs. Stewart. Burns calls it simply 'Sweet Afton,' and adds no explanation. None was needed; the song explains itself: the lady was aware of the ways of the muse, and smiled at the images of beauty with which she was associated as she slumbered on the banks of her native stream. Unlike some other ladies of whom the Poet sang, she looked upon his strains as a mark of respect, and felt them as a work of genius. Afton is a small stream in Ayr-shire, one of the tributaries of the Nith; Afton-lodge stands upon its bank, and is the residence of Miss Stewart and her sister. The scenes on the Afton are beautiful, and merit the painter's pencil as much as the poet's song. Mrs. Stewart was heiress of the estate."—Cunningham.]

Smiling Spring comes in Rejoicing.

Tune—*Bonnie Bell.*

I.

The smiling spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly winter grimly flies;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonnie blue are the sunny skies;
Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The ev'ning gilds the ocean's swell;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my bonnie Bell.

II.

The flowery spring leads sunny summer,
And yellow autumn presses near,
Then in his turn comes gloomy winter,
Till smiling spring again appear.
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old Time and Nature their changes tell,
But never ranging, still unchanging,
I adore my bonnie Bell.

["Bonnie Bell" was long a favourite with the maidens on the banks of the Nith: the air is lively, and the words very pleasing and picturesque.]

The Carles of Dysart.

Tune—*Hey ca' thro'.*

I.

Up wi' the carles o' Dysart
And the lads o' Buckhaven,
And the kimmers o' Largo,
And the lasses o' Leven.

Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickle ado;
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickle ado.

II.

We hae tales to tell,
And we hae sangs to sing;
We hae pennies to spend,
And we hae pints to bring.

III.

We'll live a' our days,
And them that come behin',
Let them do the like,
And spend the gear they win.

Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickle ado;
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickle ado.

[Burns communicated this Fisherman's Chant to the Musical Museum. The air is lively and old; the verses, too, have an air of antiquity. The Poet excelled in the manufacture of such simulated commodities. Other verses on the same subject are to be found in later collections:—

"We'll hae mirth and laughter,
We that live by water,
Leave them that come after
To spend the gear they gather.
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
Damsels, dinna doubt it,
There's better fish i' the sea
Than ever yet came out o't."

The gallant Weaver.

Tune—*The Weavers' March.*

I.

Where Cart rins rowin' to the sea,
By mony a flow'r and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant weaver.
Oh, I had wooers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
And I was fear'd my heart would tine,
And I gied it to the weaver.

II.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,
To gie the lad that has the land;
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And gie it to the weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;
While bees delight in op'ning flowers;
While corn grows green in simmer showers,
I'll love my gallant weaver.

["Ladies may toss their heads at the humble choice of our heroine; but it was not quite so lowly as they may be pleased to suppose. In more primitive times—nay, within the memory of men—carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, or weavers, were considered superior in station to hnsbandmen; their scientific knowledge raised them in the estimation of the country above the humble tillers of the soil; and it was not till the late tremendous war doubled the consumption, and enriched farmers, that country tradesmen lost the ascendancy. The west country heroine, therefore, made no imprudent engagement: and when we reflect that the White Cart belongs to Renfrew-shire, and flows near the town of Paisley, celebrated for the labours of the loom, we shall feel that she turned her eyes to a district, populous in gallant weavers, and no doubt singled out one every way worthy of her love.

"The air is called the "Weaver's March," and is reckoned very beautiful. It has already been stated that every trade had formerly a marching air. Weavers' songs, however, are not numerous; this is the more to be wondered at when we reflect that, perhaps, the lads of the loom are the best informed of all operative bodies. Their sedentary employment, engaging the hand and eye more than the mind, enables them to reflect; and reflection has made them, generally, republicans."—Cunningham.]

The Deuk's dang o'er my Daddie, O.

Tune—*The Deuk's dang o'er my Daddie.*

I.

The bairns gat out wi' an unco shout,
The deuk's dang o'er my daddie, O!
The fient ma care, quo' the feirie auld wife,
He was but a paidlin body, O!
He paidles out, an' he paidles in,
An' he paidles late an' early, O!
Thae seven lang years I hae lien by his side,
An' he is but a fusionless carlie, O!

II.

O, haud your tongue, my feirie auld wife,
O, haud your tongue now, Nansie, O!
I've seen the day, and sae hae ye,
Ye wadna been sae donsie, O!

I've seen the day ye butter'd my brose,
And cuddled me late and early, O;
But downa do's come o'er me now,
And, oh! I feel it sairly, O!

[An old song of the same name supplied Burns with the idea of this humorous ditty. He has introduced a line or two from the old words—the rest is all his own. It speaks with the free, homely tongue of the elder muse of Scotland. The tune is very old: Playford published it in 1657, in his *Dancing Master*, and called it "The Buff Coat."]

She's fair and fause.

Tune—*She's fair and fause.*

I.

She's fair and fause that causes my smart,
I lo'ed her meikle and lang;
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may e'en gae hang.
A coof cam in wi' routh o' gear,
And I hae tint my dearest dear;
But woman is but warld's gear,
Sae let the bonnie lassie gang.

II.

Whae'er ye be that woman love,
To this be never blind,
Nae ferlie 'tis tho' fickle she prove,
A woman has 't by kind.
O woman, lovely woman fair!
An angel form's fa'n to thy share,
'Twad been o'er meikle to gien thee mair—
I mean an angel mind.

[This has been pronounced one of the happiest of the songs of Burns—it is one of the most sarcastic; the last verse is particularly bitter. No one has contended for the honour of being its heroine. The melody, which Burns picked up in the country, is almost as charming as the words which he adapted to it in the measure.]

The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman.

Tune—*The Deil cam' fiddling through the Town.*

I.

The deil cam' fiddling thro' the town,
And danced awa wi' th' Exciseman,
And ilka wife cries—"Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the prize, man!"

The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman;
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

II.

We'll mak our maut, we'll brew our drink,
We'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man;
And mony braw thanks to the meikle black deil,
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman.

III.

There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
Was—the deil's awa wi' the Exciseman.

The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman:
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman.

["Gaugers were, for a long period, so cordially disliked in Scotland, that to cheat them was almost considered a duty. Tradition relates that, at Annan, once, a large quantity of smuggled tea and brandy had just been carried into an inn when, to the consternation of all concerned, the gauger was seen approaching. Concealment was out of the question, for the importation was large, and lying on the floor. All this was observed by a shrewd idiot, well known by the name of Daft Davie Graham; he snatched up a long whip, and walking leisurely to a 'midden-dub,' threw in the lash of the whip, watched it, and played it with all the anxiety of an angler.—'What are ye fishing for there, Davie?' said the officer of the revenue.—'Fishing for deevils,' was the answer.—'Deevils!' said the other, 'and what do you bait with?'—'Gaugers,' replied David. The laugh of the bystanders at the sharp joke made the gauger turn his horse's head another road, and miss his expected prey."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The Lovely Lass of Inverness.

Tune—*The Lass of Inverness.*

I.

The lovely lass o' Inverness
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, alas!
And aye the saut tear blin's her e'e:
Drumossie moor—Drumossie day—
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

II.

Their winding sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see:
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee.

[As the Poet passed slowly over the fatal moor of Culloden, the lament of the Lass of Inverness rose, it is said, on his fancy. He composed it to an air by Oswald; the words are deeply affecting, and the tune tender. Cromek remarks that "Burns's most successful imitation of the old style seems to be in 'The lovely Lass of Inverness.'" He took up the idea from the first half-verse, which is all that remains of the old words, and this prompted the feelings and the tone of the time he wished to commemorate. He scattered these samples to be picked up by inquisitive criticism, that he might listen to its remarks, and, perhaps, secretly enjoy the admiration which they excited.]

Another song, on the same subject, has found its way into our collections. The following is a verse:—

"As I came in by Inverness,
The simmer sun was sinking down;
And there I met a weel-faur'd lass,
And she was greeting through the town.
The grey-hair'd men were a' i' the streets,
And old dames crying—sad to see!
The flower o' the lads of Inverness
Lie bloodie on Culloden lea."

A red, red Rose.

Tune—*Graham's Strathspey.*

I.

O, MY luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O, my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

II.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
'Till a' the seas gang dry.

III.

'Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

IV.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a-while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.*

Jeannie's Bosom.

Tune—*Louis, what reck I by thee.*

I.

LOUIS, what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean?
Dyvor, beggar loons to me—
I reign in Jeannie's bosom.

II.

Let her crown my love her law,
And in her breast enthrone me:
King and nations—swith, awa!
Reif randies, I disown ye!

[Burns, in his Reliques, says, 'These words are mine.' "No bard of these, our later days, has surpassed in the art, that few can learn, of putting much sense into small space.—'Louis, what reck I by thee' is one of his happiest efforts: it is, perhaps, too peculiar in language to be fully felt by any, save Scotchmen: but to them it comes with a compact vigour of expression not usual in words fitted to music. The Jeannie of the song was afterwards Mrs. Burns: her name has no chance of passing from the earth, if impassioned verse can preserve it."—CUNNINGHAM.]

* [The song which supplied Burns with such exquisite ideas was written by Lieutenant Hinches, as a farewell to his sweetheart, when on the eve of parting. We subjoin a portion of it:—

"O fare thee well, my dearest dear,
And fare thee well a while;
But I am coming back again,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Ten thousand miles and more, my dear,
Thro' Flanders, France, and Spain;
My heart will never be at ease
Till we twa meet again.

O stay thee still, my dearest dear!
O stay still till we see,
Gin that our friends will be content
That we twa married be.

Your friends and mine, my only love,
Look with an angry eye;
But ye shall be my dearest dear
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And ye shall be my dearest dear
When a' these works are done.

Behold the crow that is sae black
Shall change his colour white,
Before that I prove fause to thee—
The day shall turn to night.

The day shall turn to night, my love
And the world upside down;
And ye shall be my dearest dear
While shines the sun and moon.

But what, my love, if I fall sick,
When ye are frae me gone;
And nane to hear my sad, sad sighs,
Nor yet my heavy moan?

But I'll be like yon turtle dove,
That sits on yonder tree,
Lamenting for her lost marrow—
And sae will I for thee."]

Had I the Wyte she bade me.

Tune—*Had I the Wyte she bade me.*

I.

HAD I the wyte, had I the wyte,
Had I the wyte she bade me;
She watch'd me by the hie-gate side,
And up the loan she shaw'd me;
And when I wadna venture in,
A coward loon she ca'd me;
Had kirk and state been in the gate,
I lighted when she bade me.

II.

Sae craftilie she took me ben,
And bade me make nae clatter;
"For our ramgunshoch, glum guidman
Is o'er ayont the water:"
Whae'er shall say I wanted grace,
When I did kiss and dawte her,
Let him be planted in my place,
Syne say I was a fautor.

III.

Could I for shame, could I for shame,
Could I for shame refus'd her?
And wadna manhood been to blame
Had I unkindly us'd her?
He claw'd her wi' the ripplin-kame,
And blae and bluidy bruis'd her;
When sic a husband was frae hame
What wife but wad excus'd her?

IV.

I dighted aye her een sae blue,
And bann'd the cruel randy;
And weel I wat her willing mou'
Was e'en like sugar-candy.
At gloamin-shot it was I trow,
I lighted on the Monday;
But I cam thro' the Tysday's dew,
To wanton Willie's brandy.

["The air to which Burns composed this song was called, 'Come kiss wi' me and clap wi' me:' and much of the story and some of the words he found in an old lyric which bore the name of 'Had I the wyte she bade me,' and out of which some readers may think he has not succeeded in excluding all that is objectionable. Those acquainted with the old unceremonious strain will wonder at the Poet's success."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Coming through the Rye.

Tune—*Coming through the Rye.*

I.

COMING through the rye, poor body,
Coming through the rye,
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

Oh Jenny's a' wat, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

II.

Gin a body meet a body—
Coming through the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need a body cry?

III.

Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the glen,
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need the warld ken?

Oh Jenny's a' wat, poor body;
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

[Burns took up the old strain, thrashed some of the loose chaff from about it, and sent it to the Musical Museum. The old "Coming through the rye" was once very popular in the northern glens; there were many verses, and, as usual, many variations:—

"Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the broom,
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need a body gloom?
Ilka body has a body,
Fient a ane hae I,
But twa 'r three lads they lo'e me weel,
And what the waur am I?"]

The Winter it is past.*

I.

THE winter it is past, and the summer's come at last,
And the little birds sing on ev'ry tree;
Now every thing is glad, while I am very sad,†
Since my true love is parted from me.‡

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* [This song was originally published in the Musical Museum. The first half of it also occurs, as it stands in the text, in Thomson's Collection, vol. vi. p. 50, where it is expressly stated to have been written by Burns. The text also agrees with a copy in the Poet's own hand, with which it has been collated. Gilbert Burns, in a letter to Cromek, dated February 1809, after the publication of the Reliques, speaking of this Fragment, says it was not written by his brother, but well he recollected his mother singing it, when he was a little boy. Perhaps the additions and corrections were by the hand of Burns. At all events we think it better to insert it among the works of the Poet.—C.]

† VAR.—The hearts of these are glad, but mine is very sad,

‡ VAR.—For my lover has parted from me.

II.

The rose upon the brier, by the waters running clear,
May have charms for the linnet or the bee;
Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts rest,
But my true love is parted from me.

III.

My love is like the sun, in the firmament does run,
For ever is constant and true;*
But his is like the moon, that wanders up and down,
And is every month changing a new.

IV.

All you that are in love, and cannot it remove,
I pity the pains you endure:
For experience makes me know that your hearts are full o' woe,
A woe that no mortal can cure.

[" We are not sure upon what authority this song is ascribed to Burns. We are almost confident that we have seen copies of it anterior to his time; indeed the first verse is the starting one of a common ballad, called "The Curragh of Kildare." Cromek found the first two verses of this song among Burns' MSS., consequently he published them as the production of his muse, obviously unaware that they, as well as the two others which follow them, had been previously published in Johnson's Musical Museum. In that work they are given without any initial or other mark which can lead us to ascribe them to Burns."—MOTHERWELL.]

Young Jamie, Pride of a' the Plain.

Tune—*The Carlin o' the Glen.*

I.

YOUNG Jamie, pride of a' the plain,
Sae gallant and sae gay a swain;
Thro' a' our lasses he did rove,
And reign'd resistless king of love:
But now wi' sighs and starting tears,
He strays among the woods and briers;
Or in the glens and rocky caves,
His sad complaining dowie raves.

II.

I wha sae late did range and rove,
And chang'd with every moon my love,
I little thought the time was near
Repentance I should buy sae dear:
The slighted maids my torments see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I dree;
While she, my cruel, scornfu' Fair,
Forbids me e'er to see her mair!

* VAR.—My love is like the Sun, that unwearied doth run
Thro' the firmament, aye constant and true.

["Who the Jamie of this song was no one has told us, nor whether the strain is partly old or wholly new. No doubt it must be numbered among those hasty and quickly considered things which it was the pleasure of Burns to write and leave unclaimed, with the intention, perhaps, of giving the subject and air his more serious thoughts on some day of leisure, which never arrived. The air is plaintive, but the name has no affinity with the song.

"The story is, however, an old one: a gay lover, who ranged at will among the beauties of the land, and seemed, like quicksilver, coy as well as bright, is at last ensnared by the charms of one who not only scorns him, but forbids him ever to think of her more. Jamie belike, when reflection arrives, may enact the knowing part of Duncan Gray, and gain her hand by seeming to disregard it. At all events, he seems one who will try no tragic conclusions, nor even speak of 'lowpin owre a linn.' He resembles more the honest lad of Annandale, who declared he was sae vexed when Jenny Johnston of Howbottom refused his hand that he supped mair parridge than wad hae served three mowers, and kicked the muckle pot till it gaed owre ringing."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Out ober the Forth.

Tune—*Charlie Gordon's Welcome Hame.*

I.

OUT over the Forth I look to the north,
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land, or the wild-rolling sea.

II.

But I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the west lives he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my babie and me.

["The finest examples," says Jeffrey, "of this simple and unpretending tenderness, are to be found in those songs which are likely to transmit the name of Burns to all future generations. He found this delightful trait in the old Scottish ballads which he took for his model, and upon which he improved with a felicity and delicacy of imitation altogether unrivalled in the history of literature. Sometimes it is the brief and simple pathos of the genuine old ballad." In one of his letters to Cunningham, dated 11th March, 1791, Burns quotes the last four lines, and inquires how his friend likes it. The air was altered by Clarke; and the words suffered a change—a change that did not at all affect the sense. Of this exquisite ballad, the last verse only is given by Currie.—He knew not that the opening stanza existed.]

The Lass of Ecclefechan.

Tune—*Jacky Latin.**

I.

GAT ye me, O gat ye me,
O gat ye me wi' naething?
Rock and reel, and spinnin' wheel,
A mickle quarter basin.
Bye attour, my gutcher has
A hich house and a laigh ane,
A' for bye, my bonnie sel',
The toss of Ecclefechan.

II.

O haud your tongue now, Luckie Laing,
O haud your tongue and jauner;
I held the gate till you I met,
Syne I began to wander:
I tint my whistle and my sang,
I tint my peace and pleasure;
But your green graff, now, Luckie Laing,
Wad airt me to my treasure.

[During the Poet's first visit to Annandale, an old song, called "the Lass of Ecclefechan," was sung to him, with which he was so amused that he noted it down, and, at a leisure moment, rendered the language more delicate, and the sentiments less warm, and sent it to the Musical Museum. The name of this pleasant little town was said to be unsuitable for rhyme. One day, as Burns and his brother gauger, Lewars, were riding along Bonshaw-braes, the latter said, "Come, give us a song in which one of the lines will rhyme to Ecclefechan." The Poet mused a little, and, with a humorous story running in his head, composed, and chanted as he composed, a song hitherto confined to manuscript, called "The Trogger." The heroine of the ditty speaks:—

"As I came down by Annan side,
Intending for the border,
Amang the scroggie banks and braes,
Wha met me but a trogger."

The description which she gives of her experiences is very graphic, but too much in the free manner of the old rustic minstrels. In the last verse the Poet remembered the object of the song:—

"Then up we gat, and took the road,
And in by Ecclefechan,
Whar the brandy-stoup we gart it clink,
And strong ale ream the quech in."]

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*To those curious in snatches of our ancient Caledonian Muse, it may not be unacceptable to present them with the original words of the air to which Burns has attached the above words:

Bonnie Jockie, braw Jockie,
Bonnie Jockie Latin,.
His skin was like the silk sae fine,
And mine was like the satin.
Bonnie Jockie, braw Jockie,
Bonnie Jockie Latin,
Because she wudna gie'm a kiss,
His heart was at the breakin'.
Bonnie Jockie, &c.
Jockie Latin's gotten a wife,
He kentna how to guide her;
He put a saddle on her back,
And bade the devil ride her.
Bonnie Jockie, &c.

The Cooper o' Cuddie.

Tune—*Bob at the Bowster.*

I.

THE cooper o' Cuddie cam' here awa;
He ca'd the girrs out owre us a'—
And our gude-wife has gotten a ca'
That anger'd the silly guid-man, O.

We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
Behind the door, behind the door,
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
And cover him under a mawn, O.

II.

He sought them out, he sought them in,
Wi', deil hae her! and, deil hae him!
But the body he was sae doited and blin',
He wist na where he was gaun, O.

III.

They cooper'd at e'en, they cooper'd at morn,
'Till our guid-man has gotten the scorn;
On ilka brow she's planted a horn,
And swears that there they shall stan', O.

We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
Behind the door, behind the door;
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
And cover him under a mawn, O.

["The delicacy of this song cannot be compared to its wit. Burns was in all respects the poet of the people; he relished the rough jokes, and natural humour, and lively stories of his fellow peasants; no man in wide Scotland had so many merry tales to tell, and so many joyous songs to sing. Nor can the merits of all his lyrics be appreciated by men born in the 'high places:' though his manly vigour, high-souled independence, and glorious verse have given him a hold on every true English heart, he wrote exclusively for the people of Scotland—he thought Scottish fame sufficient—nay, in devoting his talents so much to lyric composition, he seemed to court the applause of the humble rather than the high, and wrote for the 'common people,'—nature's best judges, as he truly calls them."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Ah, Chloris.

Tune—*Major Graham.*

Ah, Chloris! since it may na be
That thou of love wilt hear;
If from the lover thou maun flee,
Yet let the friend be dear.

Altho' I love my Chloris mair
Than ever tongue could tell;
My passion I will ne'er declare,
I'll say, I wish thee well.

Tho' a' my daily care thou art,
And a' my nightly dream,
I'll hide the struggle in my heart,
And say it is esteem.

[This song appeared for the first time in Pickering's Aldine edition of the Poetical Works of Robert Burns, Vol. iii. p. 179. It is printed from the original MS. in the Poet's own handwriting. Chloris was Miss Jean Lorimer.]

For the Sake of Somebody.

Tune—*For the Sake of Somebody.*

I.

My heart is sair—I dare na tell—
My heart is sair for Somebody;
I could wake a winter night
For the sake o' Somebody.
Oh-hon! for Somebody!
Oh-hey! for Somebody!
I could range the world around,
For the sake o' Somebody!

II.

Ye Powers that smile on virtuous love,
O, sweetly smile on Somebody!
Frae ilka danger keep him free,
And send me safe my Somebody.
Oh-hon! for Somebody!
Oh-hey! for Somebody!
I wad do—what wad I not?
For the sake o' Somebody!

["For the sake of Somebody," by Allan Ramsay, suggested "Somebody" to Burns, who borrowed two or three lines of the first stanza. From whom Ramsay took the idea of his song is not known; some of it is older than his day:—

"For the sake of Somebody,
For the sake of Somebody;
I could wake a winter night
For the sake of Somebody.
I am gaun to seek a wife,
I am gaun to buy a plaidy;
I have coft three stane o' woo'—
Carlin, is thy daughter ready?"

How different the tone when Ramsay takes it up!

"Betty, lassie, say't thysel',
Though thy dame be ill to shoo,
First we'll buckle, then we'll tell,
Let her flyte, and syne come to:
What signifies a mither's gloom,
When love and kisses come in play?
Shou'd we wither in our bloom,
And in simmer mak' nae hay?"

The Cardin' o't.

Tune—*Malt Fish and Dumplings.*

I.

I coft a stane o' haslock woo',
To make a coat to Johnny o't;
For Johnny is my only jo,
I lo'e him best of ony yet.

The cardin o't, the spinnin' o't,
The warpin' o't, the winnin' o't;
When ilka ell cost me a groat,
The tailor staw the lynin o't.

II.

For though his locks be lyart grey,
And tho' his brow be beld aboon;
Yet I hae seen him on a day
The pride of a' the parishen.

The cardin' o't, the spinnin' o't,
The warpin' o't, the winnin' o't;
When ilka ell cost me a groat,
The tailor staw the lynin o't.

["The little of this song to which antiquity lays claim is so trifling that the whole may be said to be the work of Burns. The tenderness of Johnnie's wife can only be fully felt by those who know that hause-lock wool is the softest and finest of the fleece, and is shorn from the throats of sheep in the summer heat, to give them air and keep them cool.

"In former times, before well-made roads, and coaches, and caravans were common, a sheep-farmer rarely descended from his hills to the towns, while the commodities of the latter seldom found their way to his fire-side. It was the custom for two or three sagacious dames belonging to the 'corn-land,' to make an inroad upon the 'wool-land,' and barter tea, and lace, and similar light luxuries, with the shepherds' wives, for 'hause-lock woo',' and such like trimmings."—Cunningham.]

The Lass that made the Bed to me.

Tune—*The Lass that made the Bed to me.*

I.

When Januar' wind was blawing cauld,
As to the north I took my way,
The mirksome night did me enfauld,
I knew na where to lodge till day.

II.

By my good luck a maid I met,
Just in the middle o' my care;
And kindly she did me invite
To walk into a chamber fair.

III.

I bow'd fu' low, unto this maid,
And thank'd her for her courtesie;
I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And bade her mak a bed for me.

IV.

She made the bed baith large and wide,
Wi' twa white hands she spread it down;
She put the cup to her rosy lips, [soun'."
And drank, "Young man, now sleep ye

V.

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
And frae my chamber went wi' speed;
But I call'd her quickly back again
To lay some mair below my head.

VI.

A cod she laid below my head,
And served me wi' due respect;
And, to salute her wi' a kiss,
I put my arms about her neck.

VII.

"Haud off your hands, young man," she says,
"And dinna sae uncivil be:
Gif ye hae onie love for me,
O wrang na my virginitie!"

VIII.

Her hair was like the links o' gowd,
Her teeth were like the ivorie;
Her cheeks like lilies dipt in wine,
The lass that made the bed to me.

IX.

Her bosom was the driven snaw,
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see;
Her limbs the polish'd marble stane,
The lass that made the bed to me.

X.

I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
And aye she wist na what to say,
I laid her between me and the wa'—
The lassie thought na lang till day.

XI.

Upon the morrow when we rase,
I thank'd her for her courtesie;
But aye she blush'd, and aye she sigh'd,
And said, "Alas! ye've ruin'd me."

XII.

I clasp'd her waist, and kiss'd her syne,
While the tear stood twinkling in her e'e;
I said, "My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye aye shall mak the bed to me."

XIII.

She took her mither's Holland sheets,
And made them a' in sarks to me:
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.

XIV.

The bonnie lass made the bed to me,
The braw lass made the bed to me;
I'll ne'er forget, till the day I die,
The lass that made the bed to me!

[In his notes to the Musical Museum Burns says:—'The bonnie lass that made the bed to me' was composed on an amour of Charles II., when skulking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the house of Port Letham, who was the lass that made the bed to him! His success was recorded by a cavalier minstrel in words which were once popular both in Scotland and England:—

"There was a lass dwelt in the north,
A bonnie lass of high degree;
A bonnie lass, and her name was Nell,
A blyther lass you ne'er did see.

CHORUS.

"O the bed to me, the bed to me,
The lass that made the bed to me;
Blythe, and bonnie, and sweet was she,
The lass that made the bed to me."

"Burns took up the old song—which was sadly corrupted—and, exercising a poet's skill upon it, manufactured the present version: in the amended copy he makes the heroine a humble maiden, and changes the character of the composition."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Sae far awa.

Tune—*Dalkeith Maiden Bridge.*

I.

O, SAD and heavy should I part,
But for her sake sae far awa;
Unknowing what my way may thwart,
My native land sae far awa.
Thou that of a' things Maker art,
That form'd this Fair sae far awa,
Gie body strength, then I'll ne'er start
At this my way sae far awa.

II.

How true is love to pure desert,
So love to her, sae far awa:
And nocht can heal my bosom's smart,
While, oh! she is sae far awa.
Nane other love, nane other dart,
I feel but her's, sae far awa;
But fairer never touch'd a heart
Than her's, the Fair sae far awa.

["This is another of the many songs which Burns wrote for the Musical Museum.

"It must be acknowledged that the Scotch give great occasion for songs of this nature—they wander the world over. Their native land is poor and sterile, and unable to maintain the half of the hardy and enterprising race to whom it gives birth. They are trained up to endurance and privation; they are well educated, for they can all read, write, and cypher; they are all intelligent, for a Scottish peasant knows more than the alehouse can tell him, and would think himself ignorant were he not to look far beyond the business by which he gains his bread. He has no poor-laws to hold out a miserable boon to his declining years; he, therefore, marches east, west, north, or south, as fortune or inclination determines, and relieves his own land while he benefits others."—CUNNINGHAM.]

I'll aye ca' in by yon Town.

Tune—*I'll gae nae mair to yon Town.*

I.

I'LL aye ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green, again;
I'll aye ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonnie Jean again.
There's nane sall ken, there's nane sall guess,
What brings me back the gate again;
But she my fairest faithfu' lass,
And stownlins we sall meet again.

II.

She'll wander by the aiken tree,
When trystin-time draws near again;
And when her lovely form I see,
O haith, she's doubly dear again!
I'll aye ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green again;
I'll aye ca' in by yon town.
And see my bonnie Jean again.

[An old song supplied Burns with the starting sentiment of this little delicious lyric:—

"I'll gang nae mair to yon town,
O never a' my life again;
I'll ne'er gae back to yon town,
To seek anither wife again."

"Jean Armour was the heroine; the allusions to the trysting-tree, and the stolen interview, will be understood by all the daughters of Caledonia. There are few burn-banks, or romantic glens, or spreading woods in any lowland district, that are not hallowed in the memories of many by visions of past endearment—of golden hours—nay, minutes of rapture worthy of having been born for: no writer has entered so fully into these mysteries as Burns. Love has no charm unless it comes in a poetic shape; the lover who desires coal and candle may as well ask for his supper at once; he is regarded as a fellow of no soul, if he cannot dare flooded streams and haunted roads; and, should a thunder-storm meet him on his way, he will be wise not to turn or seek shelter, unless he wishes to be made the laughing-stock of half the lasses in the vale. It is recorded of a young girl on Nith-side, that, in alluding to her first interview with a lover, she tossed her tresses in scorn, saying, 'Him! I tried him wi' a lanely room and a lighted candle; and he hadna the sense to steek the door, and blaw it out!'"—CUNNINGHAM.]

* VAR.—*Maid's.* † Jeannie.
‡ *Amang the broomy braes see green.*

O wat ye wha's in yon Town.

Tune—*I'll aye ca' in by yon Town.*

I.

Now haply down yon gay green shaw
She wanders by yon spreading tree:
How blest ye flow'rs that round her blaw,
Ye catch the glances o' her e'e!

CHORUS.

O, WAT ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin' sun upon?
The fairest dame's* in yon town,
That e'enin' sun is shining on.

II.

How blest ye birds that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year!
And doubly welcome be the spring,
The season to my Lucy † dear.

III.

The sun blinks blithe on yon town,
And on yon bonnie braes of Ayr; ‡
But my delight's in yon town,
And dearest bliss, is Lucy fair. §

IV.

Without my love, || not a' the charms
O' Paradise could yield me joy;
But gie me Lucy ** in my arms,
And welcome Lapland's dreary sky!

V.

My cave wad be a lover's bower,
Tho' raging winter rent the air;
And she a lovely little flower,
That I wad tent and shelter there.

VI.

O, sweet is she in yon town,
The sinkin' sun's gane down upon;
A fairer than 's in yon town
His setting beam ne'er shone upon.

VII.

If angry fate is sworn my foe,
And suffering I am doom'd to bear;
I careless quit aught else below,
But spare me—spare me, Lucy †† dear!

§ *And dearest pleasure is my Jean.*
‖ *Fair.* ** *Jeannie.* †† *Jeannie.*

VIII.

For while life's dearest blood is warm,
Ae thought frae her shall ne'er depart,
And she—as fairest is her form!
She has the truest, kindest heart!

O, wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin sun upon?
The fairest dame's* in yon town
That e'enin sun is shining on.

[The heroine of this fine song was originally his "bonnie *Jean*," but Burns altered it afterwards in compliment to Miss Lucy Johnstone, the daughter of Wynne Johnstone of Hilton, Esq. Lucy was married to Mr. Richard Alexander Oswald, of Auchencruive; she was an accomplished and lovely woman, and died at Lisbon, early in life. The song is written in the character of her husband. "Did you ever, my dear Syme," said the Poet, "meet with a man who owed more to the divine Giver of all good things than Mr. Oswald? A fine fortune; a pleasing exterior; self-evident amiable dispositions, and an ingenuous, upright mind—and that, too, informed much beyond the usual run of young fellows of his rank; and to all this, such a woman! But of her I shall say nothing at all, in despair of saying anything adequate. In my song I have endeavoured to do justice to what would be his feelings on seeing, in the scene I have drawn, the habitation of his Lucy. As I am a good deal pleased with my performance, I, in my first fervour, thought of sending it to Mrs. Oswald." The original version, composed in honour of his "bonnie Jean," is inserted in the fifth volume of "The Musical Museum," but from certain and uncertain circumstances it was not published in the early editions of the Poet's works.]

The mirk Night o' December.

Tune—*May, thy Morn.*

I.

O MAY, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet
As the mirk night o' December;
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she, I dare na name,
But I will aye remember.
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will aye remember.

II.

And here's to them, that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum;
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's guid watch o'er them!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum!

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* VAR.—The dearest maid's.—MS.

["The lady, whom the Poet desired rather to remember than name, is said, in our lyrical legends, to have been the fair Clarinda, of whose merits Burns has said and sung so much. It has also been ascribed to the charms of a Nithsdale dame, 'who brewed guid ale for gentlemen,' and loved to be admired by her customers.—The song was first published in Johnson's Museum: the air seems a variation of 'Andrew and his cutty gun.'

"The ladies and wine have furnished themes for innumerable songs; and so long as the former are lovely, and the latter sparkles, they will continue to be sung. Both are united in 'O May, thy morn:' the Bard, as the wine-cup circulates, remembers a mirk night in December, and a fair one who had rendered it cheerful. He dates joy from that night, as a free heroine in Mackenzie's tale dates all things which befel her from the time she met with her misfortune!"—CUNNINGHAM.]

Lovely Polly Stewart.

Tune—*Ye're welcome, Charlie Stuart.*

I.

O LOVELY Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That's half sae fair as thou art.
The flower it blaws, it fades and fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth eternal youth
Will gi'e to Polly Stewart.

II.

May he whose arms shall fauld thy charms,
Possess a leal and true heart;
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart.
O lovely Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That's half so sweet as thou art.

[The lady who inspired this song was unconscious at the time, while she caused her table to be spread, and her wine poured out, that her name was to be preserved in undying verse.—The Poet had, in his thoughts, a Jacobite lyric, called "Ye're welcome, Charlie Stuart:"—

"Had I the power as I've the will,
I'd make thee famous by my quill,
Thy foes I'd scatter, quell, and kill,
From Billingsgate to Duart.
Thour't welcome, Charlie Stuart;
Thour't welcome, Charlie Stuart:
A shepherd's wand will grow a brand
When thou comes—Charlie Stuart!"

The Highland Laddie.

Tune—*If thou'lt play me fair Play.*

I.

THE bonniest lad that e'er I saw,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Wore a plaid, and was fu' braw,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
On his head a bonnet blue,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie ·
His royal heart was firm and true,
Bonnie Highland laddie.

II.

Trumpets sound, and cannons roar,
Bonnie lassie, Lawland lassie;
And a' the hills wi' echoes roar,
Bonnie Lawland lassie.
Glory, honour, now invite,
Bonnie lassie, Lawland lassie,
For freedom and my king to fight,
Bonnie Lawland lassie.

III.

The sun a backward course shall take,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
Ere aught thy manly courage shake,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
Go! for yoursel procure renown,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
And for your lawful king, his crown,
Bonnie Highland laddie.

[The Poet took a long ditty called "The Highland Lad and Lawland Lassie," and compressed it into three stanzas. Another song, now almost forgotten, gives the name of the air:—

"If thou't play me fair play,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Another year for thee I'll stay,
Bonnie Highland laddie;
For a' the lasses hereabouts,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Marry nane but Geordie's louts,
Bonnie Highland laddie."]

Anna, thy Charms.

Tune—*Bonnie Mary.*

ANNA, thy charms my bosom fire,
And 'press my soul with care;
But, ah! how bootless to admire,
When fated to despair!
Yet in thy presence, lovely fair,
To hope may be forgiv'n;
For sure 'twere impious to despair,
So much in sight of Heav'n.

["Burns inserted this elegant little lyric in the third edition of his poems. It also appears in the last volume of the Musical Museum. The concluding sentiment is akin to that fine compliment in the 'Shepherd's Mournful Fate,' by Hamilton of Bangour:—

'For oh! that form, so heavenly fair,
Those languid eyes so sweetly smiling,
That artless blush, and modest air,
So fatally beguiling:
Thy every look, and every grace,
So charm whene'er I view thee,
Till death o'ertake me in the chace,
Still will my hopes pursue thee:
But when my tedious hours are pass'd,
Be this last blessing given—
Low at thy feet to breathe my last,
And die in sight of heaven.'

Burns had more nature and strength than Hamilton; but some of the lyrics of the latter are unequalled for elegance."—CUNNINGHAM.]

Cassillis' Banks.

Tune—*Unknown.*

I.

Now bank an' brae are claith'd in green,
An' scatter'd cowslips sweetly spring;
By Girvan's fairy-haunted stream
The birdies flit on wanton wing.
To Cassillis' banks when e'ening fa's,
There wi' my Mary let me flee,
There catch her ilka glance of love,
The bonnie blink o' Mary's e'e!

II.

The chield wha boasts o' warld's walth
Is aften laird o' meikle care;
But Mary she is a' mine ain—
Ah! fortune canna gie me mair!
Then let me range by Cassillis' banks,
Wi' her, the lassie dear to me,
And catch her ilka glance o' love,
The bonnie blink o' Mary's e'e!

["The stream of Girvan, and the banks of Cassillis, flowed and flourished to the last in the heart and fancy of Burns: when he desired to compose a song for any tune which affected him, he recalled a favourite haunt of his youth, and a form dear to his heart; and, like the lyrist Cowley, gave dancing words to speaking strings. The charms of nature shared his heart with those of living beauty; one line is both a history and a landscape:—

'Girvan's fairy-haunted stream.'

"The beauties of Cassillis' banks he had sung elsewhere.

"Other national songs give no more than the image of female loveliness: those of Scotland add the flowers on which the foot of beauty

treads, the stream which murmurs at her side, the woods which wave around her, and the birds which welcome her with their songs."—CUNNINGHAM.]

To thee, lov'd Nith.

Tune—*Unknown.*

I.

To thee, lov'd Nith, thy gladsome plains,
Where late wi' careless thought I rang'd,
Though prest wi' care and sunk in woe,
To thee I bring a heart unchang'd.

II.

I love thee, Nith, thy banks and braes,
Tho' mem'ry there my bosom tear;
For there he rov'd that brake my heart,
Yet to that heart, ah! still how dear!

Bannocks o' Barley.*

Tune—*The Killogie.*

I.

BANNOCKS o' bear meal,
Bannocks o' barley;
Here's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley.
Wha in a brulzie,
Will first cry a parley?
Never the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley!

II.

Bannocks o' bear meal,
Bannocks o' barley;
Here's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley!
Wha in his wae-days
Were loyal to Charlie?
Wha but the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley?

The air to which these words were written gave the name to an old song, on which were at once impressed the free language and free manners of our ancestors.

"A lad and a lassie,
Lay in the Killogie."]

Hee Balou.

Tune—*The Highland Balou*

I.

HEE balou! my sweet wee Donald,
Picture o' the great Clanronald;
Brawlie kens our wanton chief
Wha got my young Highland thief.

II.

Leeze me on thy bonnie craigie
An' thou live, thou'll steal a naigie:
Travel the country thro' and thro',
And bring hame a Carlisle cow.

III.

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the border,
Weel, my babie, may thou furder:
Herry the louns o' the laigh countrie,
Syne to the Highlands hame to me.

* Burns, when he composed this song, probably had in his view the old Scottish song called "Bannocks o' Barley Meal," said to have been written by the great John, duke of Argyle, which is as follows:—

My name is Argyll: you may think it strange
To live at the court, and never to change;
All falsehood and flatt'ry I do disdain;
In my secret thoughts no deceit shall remain;
In siege or in battle I ne'er was disgrac'd;
I always my king and my country have fac'd;
I'll do any thing for my country's weal,
I'd live upon bannocks o' barley meal.

Adieu to the courtiers of London town,
For to my ain country I will gang down;
At the sight of Kirkaldy ance again,
I'll cock up my bonnet, and march amain.
O the muckle de'il tak' a' your noise and strife,
I'm fully resolv'd for a country life,
Where a' the braw lasses, wha ken me weel,
Will feed me wi' bannocks o' barley meal.

I'll quickly lay down my sword and my gun,
And I'll put my plaid and my bonnet on,
Wi' my plaidin' stockings and leather-heel'd shoon;
They'll mak me appear a fine sprightly loon.
And when I am drest thus frae tap to tae,
Hame to my Maggie I think for to gae,
Wi' my claymore hinging down to my heel,
To whang at the bannocks o' barley meal.

I'll buy a fine present to bring to my dear,
A pair of fine garters for Maggie to wear,
And some pretty things else, I do declare,
When she gangs wi' me to Paisley fair.
And whan we are married we'll keep a cow,
My Maggie sall milk her, and I will plow;
We'll live a' the winter on beef and lang-kail,
And whang at the bannocks o' barley meal.

If my Maggie should chance to bring me a son,
He'll fight for his king as his daddy has done;
I'll send him to Flanders some breeding to learn,
Syne hame into Scotland and keep a farm.
And thus we'll live and industrious be,
And wha'll be sae great as my Maggie and me?
We'll soon grow as fat as a Norway seal,
Wi' feeding on bannocks o' barley meal.

Adieu to you citizens every ane,
Wha jolt in your coaches to Drury-lane;
You bites of Bear-garden who fight for gains,
And ye fops who have got more wigs than brains;
You cullies and bullies, I'll bid you adieu,
For whoring and swearing I'll leave all to you;
Your woodcock and pheasant, your duck and your teal,
I'll leave them for bannocks o' barley meal.

I'll leave aff kissing a citizen's wife,
I'm fully resolv'd for a country life;
Kissing and toying I'll spend the lang day,
Wi' bonny young lasses on cocks of hay;
Where each clever lad gives his bonny lass
A kiss and a tumble upo' the green grass.
I'll awa to the Highlands as fast 's I can reel,
And whang at the bannocks o' barley meal.

[A Highland lady, it is said, sung a song in Gaelic, the air of which pleased Burns so much that he desired to know the meaning of the words: he smiled at the oral translation, and crooning the air over for a minute's space or so, chanted "Hee Balou," wrote it down, and sent it to the Museum.

Concerning this song, Cromek says—"The time when the moss-troopers and cattle-drivers on the borders began their nightly depredations was the first Michaelmas moon. Cattle-stealing formerly was a mere foraging expedition; and it has been remarked that many of the best families in the north can trace their descent from the daring sons of the mountains. The produce (by way of dowry to a laird's daughter) of a Michaelmas moon is proverbial; and by the aid of Lochiel's lanthorn (the moon) these exploits were the most desirable things imaginable. In the 'Hee Balou' we see one of those heroes in the cradle."]

Wae is my Heart.

Tune—*Wae is my Heart.*

I.

WAE is my heart, and the tear's in my e'e;
Lang, lang, joy's been a stranger to me:
Forsaken and friendless, my burden I bear,
And the sweet voice o' pity ne'er sounds in my ear.

II.

Love, thou hast pleasures, and deep hae I lov'd:
Love, thou hast sorrows, and sair hae I prov'd;
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,
I can feel by its throbbings will soon be at rest.

III.

O, if I were, where happy I hae been,
Down by yon stream, and yon bonnie castle-green;
For there he is wand'ring, and musing on me,
Wha wad soon dry the tear frae his Phillis's e'e.

[These verses were composed at the request of Clarke the musician, who felt—or imagined he felt—much pain of heart for a young lady of Nithsdale. The air is a simple one, and the song is in keeping.]

Here's his Health in Water.

Tune—*The Job of Journeywork.*

ALTHO' my back be at the wa',
And tho' he be the fautor;
Altho' my back be at the wa',
Yet, here's his health in water!

O! wae gae by his wanton sides,
Sae brawlie 's he could flatter;
Till for his sake I'm slighted sair,
And dree the kintra clatter.
But tho' my back be at the wa',
And tho' he be the fautor;
But tho' my back be at the wa,'
Yet, here's his health in water!

[The song was first published in the Musical Museum, and was written when the Poet was in Dumfries: the idea was taken from an old lyric, of which the o'erword was,

"Here's his health in water."]

My Peggy's Face.

Tune—*My Peggy's Face.*

I.

MY Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heav'nly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

II.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway!
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The gen'rous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms—
These are all immortal charms.

[The heroine of these sweet verses was Margaret Chalmers: the gentleness, the candour, and the accomplishments of that lady seem often to have occurred to the mind of Burns.]

Gloomy December.

Tune—*Wandering Willie.*

I.

ANCE mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
Ance mair I hail thee, wi' sorrow and care;
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh! ne'er to meet mair.
Fond lovers' parting is sweet painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, oh farewell for ever!
Is anguish unmingl'd, and agony pure.

II.

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
'Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Since my last hope and last comfort is gone!
Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh! ne'er to meet mair.

["Clarinda inspired these verses, and they are worthy of her merits, personal and mental. To his parting with that lady the Bard often recurred; in truth, he left Edinburgh with great reluctance; there he had pleased society, and there only could he hope for 'pension, post, or place.' When he quitted it he knew he was going to the stilts of the plough, and experience told him how little he could hope from niggardly economy and sharp bargaining. He was one of nature's gentlemen, and unfit for the details of the market, the couping of horses, and the keen and eager contest carried on between seller and buyer. An old peasant once said of him 'that he was owre kind-hearted to be prosperous,' and added, 'he was ane of them that carry their corn to a falling market, and sell their hens on a rainy day!' To this impediment in the way to wealth, he repeatedly alludes in his letters—no man ever knew himself better—all fell out in his own history as he feared it would."—CUNNINGHAM.]

My Lady's Gown, there's Gairs upon't.

Tune—*Gregg's Pipes.*

CHORUS.

My lady's gown, there's gairs upon't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon't;
But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair upon't.

I.

My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane;
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

II.

My lady's white, my lady's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassillis' blude;
But her ten-pund lands o' tocher guid
Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

III.

Out o'er yon muir, out o'er yon moss,
Whare gor-cocks thro' the heather pass,
There wons auld Colin's bonnie lass,
A lily in a wilderness.

IV.

Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
Like music-notes o' lovers' hymns:
The diamond dew in her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

V.

My lady 's dink, my lady 's drest,
The flower and fancy o' the west;
But the lassie that a man lo'es best,
O that 's the lass to mak' him blest.

My lady's gown, there 's gairs upon't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon't;
But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair upon't.

[The idea of this song is believed to be old, and some of the words also; most of it, however, is the workmanship of Burns. The air to which it was written was the composition of James Gregg, a musician belonging to Ayr-shire, whose memory still lives in the west as an improver of the telescope, a mechanist, and a painter. He is still more pleasantly remembered by this tune, which is often called for when the dancers are on the floor—

"And all goes merry as a marriage bell."]

Amang the Trees where humming Bees.

Tune—*The King of France, he rode a Race.* *

I.

AMANG the trees, where humming bees
At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her pipe was singing, O;
'Twas pibroch, sang, strathspey, or reels,
She dirl'd them aff fu' clearly, O,
When there cam a yell o' foreign squeels,
That dang her tapsalteerie, O.

II.

Their capon craws and queer ha ha's,
They made our lugs grow eerie, O;
The hungry bike did scrape and pike,
'Till we were wae and weary, O;
But a royal ghaist wha ance was cas'd
A prisoner aughteen year awa,
He fir'd a fiddler in the north
That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

["Ritson says, when he was in Italy he was much interested by the chants sung by friars or priests; they bore some resemblance to the elder

* The following is the commencement of this old song:—

The King o' France he rade a race,
Out o'er the hills o' Seiry, O;
His eldest son has followed him
Upon a good grey meary, O!

Scottish melodies. This resemblance has been noticed by some of our northern authorities, who surmise that Caledonia supplied Italy with many of her most exquisite melodies. This seems as well-founded as the legend that David Rizzio brought the best Scottish airs from Italy —a story that offends our Welch musicians, who declare that David's surname was Rice, not Rizzio, and that the airs with which he charmed the Queen of Scotland were genuine Welch!

"It has been thought that Burns had all that in his mind when he wrote this song: it seems quite as likely that he alludes to the influx of Italian music by operas and oratorios; and that the fiddler of the north, who was animated by the spirit of the royal poet and musician, was honest Neil Gow, whose vigorous genius maintained the glory of our national music in spite of—

'Their capon craws, and queer ha ha's!'"

CUNNINGHAM.]

The gowden Locks of Anna.

Tune—*Banks of Banna.*

I.

YESTREEN I had a pint o' wine,
A place where body saw na';
Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine
The gowden locks of Anna.
The hungry Jew in wilderness,
Rejoicing o'er his manna,
Was naething to my hinny bliss
Upon the lips of Anna.

II.

Ye monarchs tak' the east and west,
Frae Indus to Savannah!
Gi'e me within my straining grasp
The melting form of Anna.
There I'll despise imperial charms,
An empress or sultana,
While dying raptures in her arms
I give and take with Anna!

III.

Awa', thou flaunting god o' day!
Awa', thou pale Diana!
Ilk star gae hide thy twinkling ray,
When I'm to meet my Anna.
Come, in thy raven plumage, night!
Sun, moon, and stars withdrawn a';
And bring an angel pen to write
My transports wi' my Anna!

POSTSCRIPT.

IV.

The Kirk and State may join, and tell
To do such things I maunna:
The Kirk and State may gae to h—ll,
And I'll gae to my Anna.
She is the sunshine o' my e'e,—
To live but* her I canna;
Had I on earth but wishes three,
The first should be my Anna.

[A Dumfries maiden, with a light foot and a merry eye, was the heroine of this clever song. Burns thought so well of it himself that he recommended it as one of his best to Thomson; but the latter, aware, perhaps, of the free character of her of the gowden locks, was unwilling to give her a place among lyrics dedicated to the charms of ladies of high degree and unblemished reputation, and therefore excluded it, though pressed to publish it by the Poet. Irritated, perhaps, at Thomson's refusal, he wrote the additional Stanza, by way of Postscript, in defiance of his colder blooded critic. To those who are curious in such matters, it may be told that Anna's locks were sunny rather than golden, and that she was a handmaid at an inn, and accounted beautiful by the customers when wine made them tolerant in matters of taste.]

O wat ye what my Minnie did.

I.

O WAT ye what my minnie did,
My minnie did, my minnie did,
O wat ye what my minnie did,
On Tysday 'teen to me, jo?
She laid me in a saft bed,
A saft bed, a saft bed,
She laid me in a saft bed,
And bade gude'en to me, jo.

II.

An' wat ye what the parson did,
The parson did, the parson did,
An' wat ye what the parson did,
A' for a penny fee, jo?
He loos'd on me a lang man,
A mickle man, a strang man,
He loos'd on me a lang man,
That might hae worried me, jo.

III.

An' I was but a young thing,
A young thing, a young thing,
An' I was but a young thing,
Wi' nane to pity me, jo.
I wat the kirk was in the wyte,
In the wyte, in the wyte,
To pit a young thing in a fright,
An' loose a man on me, jo.

* Without.

The Piper.

A FRAGMENT.

THERE came a piper out o' Fife,
I watna what they ca'd him;
He play'd our cousin Kate a spring,
When fient a body bade him.
And ay the mair he hotch'd an' blew,
The mair that she forbade him.

Jenny M'Craw.

A FRAGMENT.

JENNY M'Craw, she has ta'en to the heather,
Say, was it the covenant carried her thither;
Jenny M'Craw to the mountains is gane,
Their leagues and their covenants a' she has ta'en;
My head and my heart, now quo' she, are at rest,
And as for the lave, let the deil do his best.

The last braw Bridal.

A FRAGMENT.

THE last braw bridal that I was at,
'Twas on a Hallowmass day,
And there was routh o' drink and fun,
And mickle mirth and play.
The bells they rang, and the carlins sang,
And the dames danced in the ha';
The bride went to bed wi' the silly bridegroom,
In the mid'st o' her kimmers a'.

Here's to thy Health, my bonnie Lass.

Tune—*Laggan Burn.*

I.

HERE'S to thy health, my bonnie lass,
Guid night, and joy be wi' thee;
I'll come nae mair to thy bower-door,
To tell thee that I lo'e thee.
O dinna think, my pretty pink,
But I can live without thee:
I vow and swear, I dinna care,
How lang ye look about ye.

II.

Thou'rt aye sae free informing me
Thou hast nae mind to marry;
I'll be as free informing thee
Nae time hae I to tarry.
I ken thy friends try ilka means
Frae wedlock to delay thee;
Depending on some higher chance—
But fortune may betray thee.

III.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me;
But I'm as free as any he,
Sma' siller will relieve me.
I'll count my health my greatest wealth,
Sae long as I'll enjoy it:
I'll fear nae scant, I'll bode nae want,
As lang's I get employment.

IV.

But far off fowls hae feathers fair,
And aye until ye try them:
Tho' they seem fair, still have a care,
They may prove waur than I am.
But at twal at night, when the moon shines bright,
My dear, I'll come and see thee;
For the man that lo'es his mistress weel
Nae travel makes him weary.

[This was a song of the Poet's youthful days; he trimmed it up a little for the Museum, and adapted it to the beautiful Strathspey tune called "Laggan Burn." There is more of the man in his early verses, and more sentiment in his later ones.—In the manuscript of the music, there is the following note to Johnson in the hand-writing of Clarke:

"This song must have a verse more or a verse less. The music intended for it was so miserably bad that I rejected it; but luckily there was a tune called 'Laggan Burn' on the opposite side, which will answer very well by adding a verse, or curtailing one. I know that Burns will rather do the former than the latter.—

[P.S. When I wrote the above, I did not observe that there was another verse on the opposite page."]

The Farewell.

Tune—*It was a' for our rightfu' King.*

I.

IT was a' for our rightfu' king,
We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightfu' king
We e'er saw Irish land, my dear,
We e'er saw Irish land.

II.

Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My love and native land farewell,
For I maun cross the main, my dear,
For I maun cross the main.

III.

He turned him right, and round about,
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle-reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore, my dear,
With adieu for evermore.

IV.

The sodger frae the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again, my dear,
Never to meet again.

v.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep;
I think on him that's far awa',
The lee-lang night, and weep, my dear,
The lee-lang night, and weep.*

[Hogg, in his notes to the Jacobite Reliques, says this song was written by Captain Ogilvie, who was killed on the banks of the Rhine, in the year 1695. Sir Walter Scott, in the last edition of his works, refers to his beautiful song, "A weary lot is thine," in the third canto of Rokeby, and says—"The last verse is taken from the fragment of an old Scottish ballad, of which I only recollected two verses when the first edition of Rokeby was published. Mr. Thomas Sheridan kindly pointed out to me an entire copy of this beautiful song, which seems to express the fortunes of some follower of the Stuart family." The song, as copied by Scott, is nearly word for word with that of Burns in the fifth volume of the Musical Museum: it is, nevertheless, probable that the Poet rather beautified or amended some ancient strain which he had discovered than wrote it wholly from his own heart and fancy.—CUNNINGHAM.]

O steer her up.

Tune—*O steer her up, and haud her gaun.*

I.

O STEER her up and haud her gaun—
Her mither's at the mill, jo;
An' gin she winna tak' a man,
E'en let her tak' her will, jo:
First shore her wi' a kindly kiss,
And ca' anither gill, jo,
And gin she tak' the thing amiss,
E'en let her flyte her fill, jo.

II.

O steer her up, and be na blate,
An' gin she tak' it ill, jo,
Then lea'e the lassie till her fate,
And time nae langer spill, jo:
Ne'er break your heart for ae rebute,
But think upon it still, jo;
That gin the lassie winna do't,
Ye'll fin' anither will, jo.

[Allan Ramsay found a wild old song of this name and measure, and, adopting the first four lines, penned a drinking ditty, which may be found in the Tea Table Miscellany. The second verse will be sample sufficient:—

"See that shining glass of claret,
How invitingly it looks;
Take it aff, and let's hae mair o't—
Pox on fighting, trade, and books:
Let's have pleasure while we're able,
Bring us in the mickle bowl;
Place't on the middle o' the table,
And let wind and weather yowl."

Burns took the first four lines of the old strain, and eked them out in his own way.]

O aye my Wife she dang me.

Tune—*My wife she dang me.*†

I.

O AYE my wife she dang me,
An' aft my wife did bang me,

* We here subjoin part of the old song which was the prototype of the above.

The cold winter it is past and gone,
And now comes on the spring,
And I am one the king's life-guards,
And I must go fight for my king, my dear;
And I must go fight for my king.

Now since to the wars you must go,
One thing I pray grant me,
It's I will dress myself in man's attire,
And I'll travel along with thee, my dear,
And I'll travel along with thee.

I would not for ten thousand worlds
That my love endanger'd were so;
The rattling of drums and shining of swords,
Will cause great sorrow and wo, my dear,
Will cause great sorrow and wo.

I will do more for my true love
Than he will do for me;
I'll cut my hair and roll me bare,
And mourn till the day I die, my dear,
And mourn till the day I die.

So farewell mother and father dear,
My kith and kin also,
My sweet and bonny Mally Stewart,
You're the cause of all my wo, my dear,
You're the cause of all my wo.

She took the slippers off her feet,
And the cockups off her hair;
And she has ta'en a long journey,
For seven lang years and mair, my dear,
For seven lang years and mair.

Sometimes she rade, sometimes she gaed,
Sometimes sat down to mourn,
And it was aye the o'ercome o' her tale,
Shall I e'er see my bonnie laddie return, my dear,
Shall I e'er see my bonny laddie return.

The trooper turn'd himself round about,
All on the Irish shore;
He has gi'en the bridle reins a shake,
Saying adieu for evermore, my dear,
Saying adieu for evermore.

† When Burns wrote the above humorous lyric, he had probably in his recollection the old words to which the air was originally united.

I was twenty years a bachelor,
And lived a single life;
But I never could contented be,
Until I got a wife.
But I hadna lang married been
Till she began to bang me,
And ne'er dang out my very een,
And sware she would gae hang me.

Ae day I at a wedding was,
And dancing on the green;

If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith, she'll soon o'er-gang ye.
On peace and rest my mind was bent,
And fool I was I married;
But never honest man's intent
As cursedly miscarried.

II.

Some sairie comfort still at last,
When a' their days are done, man;
My pains o' hell on earth are past,
I'm sure o' bliss aboon, man.
O aye my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife did bang me,
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith, she'll soon o'er-gang ye.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld Blast.

Tune—*The Lass o' Livingstone.**

I.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee:
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

II.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,†
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there:
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

[The Poet composed this fine song in honour of Mrs. Riddel. Neither the song of Allan Ramsay to the same air, beginning with—

"Pain'd with her slighting Jamie's love,
Bell dropt a tear, Bell dropt a tear,"

nor the more ancient strain of the Lass o' Livingstone, afforded aid to the Poet. The following is a specimen of the latter:—

"The bonnie lass o' Livingstone,
Is fair to see, is fair to see:
With what a light look and a loup,
She came to me, she came to me.
She has a black and a rolling e'e,
An' a dimplit chin, an' a dimplit chin;
An' no to taste her rosy lips
Wad be a sin, wad be a sin."]

O wha is she that lo'es me.

Tune—*Morag.*

I.

O WHA is she that lo'es me,‡
And has my heart a-keeping?
O sweet is she that lo'es me,
As dews o' simmer weeping,
In tears the rose-buds steeping!

CHORUS.

O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen of womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

II.

If thou shalt meet a lassie,
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic powers alarming;
O that's, &c.

III.

If thou hadst heard her talking,
And thy attentions plighted,
That ilka body talking,
But her by thee is slighted,
And thou art all delighted;
O that's, &c.

IV.

If thou hast met this fair one;
When frae her thou hast parted,
If every other fair one,
But her, thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted;
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

I laid my hands on a kent lass,
Said, hail ye dainty quean.
Up comes my wifie in a crack,
And on the flure she dang me,
And for a lick o' the grey mare pock,
She sware that she would hang me.

But when I did get up again,
Then fast away ran I;
My wife she chas'd me owre the plain
Wi' mony a hue and cry.

But I soon tipped her the wink,
And said, nae mair ye'se bang me,
I'll drink nae mair o' your sour drink
For fear at last ye hang me.

* [VAR. The Robin came to the Wren's nest.—Poet's MS.
† —— Of earth and air, of earth and air. *ib.*
‡ [VAR.—In a copy of this song in Burns's handwriting, the first line reads thus:—
O *wat ye* wha that lo'es me.
which agrees with the version in Thomson's collection.]

[Of the air of Morag, the Poet was passionately fond. This song was found among his papers; the exact period of its composition is not known, nor has the heroine been named.]

Caledonia.

Tune—*Caledonian Hunt's Delight*

I.

THERE was once a day—but all Time then was young—
That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung,
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?)
From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she would:
Her heav'nly relations there fixed her reign,
And pledg'd her their godheads to warrant it good.

II.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred the heroine grew:
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore,
"Whoe'er shall provoke thee th' encounter shall rue!"
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport
To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn;
But chiefly the woods were her fav'rite resort,
Her darling amusement the hounds and the horn.

III.

Long quiet she reign'd; till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand: *
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd the land:
Their pounces were murder, and terror their cry,
They'd conquer'd and ruin'd a world beside;
She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly—
The daring invaders they fled or they died.

IV.

The fell Harpy-raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore! †
The wild Scandinavian boar ‡ issu'd forth
To wanton in carnage, and wallow in gore;
O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
No arts could appease them, no arms could repel;
But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Largs well can witness, and Loncartie tell. §

V.

The Cameleon-savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion, and strife;
Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his life: ‖
The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oft prowling, ensanguin'd the Tweed's silver flood:
But, taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learned to fear in his own native wood.

VI.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd, and free,
Her bright course of glory for ever shall run:
For brave Caledonia immortal must be;
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun:
Rectangle-triangle, the figure we'll choose,
The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base;
But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse;
Then, ergo, she'll match them and match them always.

["There is both knowledge of history and elegance of allegory in this singular song; but the most remarkable part is the conclusion, where the Poet proves, by mathematical demonstration, the immortality of Caledonia. It has been remarked of this, as well as others of his productions, that it bears the stamp of national love and of a manly understanding. Indeed, in the hastiest snatch he ever penned, some happy touch will be found denoting the hand of the master—some singular thought or felicitous line—easy to him and unattainable to others."—CUNNINGHAM.]

O lay thy loof in mine, Lass.

Tune—*Cordwainer's March.*

I.

O LAY thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.
A slave to love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me meikle wae;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.

II.

There's monie a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'ed best;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

* The Romans.
† The Saxons.
‡ The Danes.

§ [Two famous battles, in which the Danes or Norwegians were defeated.—CURRIE.]
‖ The Picts.

O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

[This song was written by Burns for the "Museum;" the air is commonly played on King Crispin's day, when the shoemakers hold a sort of saturnalia, and, with pennons displayed, and trumpet and drum, march through our northern borough towns, attired like kings, princes of the blood, senators, ambassadors, and warriors. The spectacle is very imposing; the "princes of a day" behave with wonderful decorum; and, save that it is more orderly, it resembles closely a real coronation pageant.]

The Fête Champêtre.

Tune—*Killiecrankie.*

I.

O WHA will to Saint Stephen's house,
To do our errands there, man?
O wha will to Saint Stephen's house,
O' th' merry lads of Ayr, man?
Or will we send a man-o'-law?
Or will we send a sodger?
Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'
The meikle Ursa-Major?

II.

Come, will ye court a noble lord,
Or buy a score o' lairds, man?
For worth and honour pawn their word,
Their vote shall be Glencaird's, man?
Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
Anither gies them clatter;
Anbank, wha guess'd the ladies' taste,
He gies a Fête Champêtre.

III.

When Love and Beauty heard the news,
The gay green-woods amang, man;
Where gathering flowers and busking bowers,
They heard the blackbird's sang, man:
A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
Sir Politicks to fetter,
As their's alone, the patent-bliss,
To hold a Fête Champêtre.

IV.

Then mounted Mirth, on gleesome wing,
O'er hill and dale she flew, man;
Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
Ilk glen and shaw she knew, man:
She summon'd every social sprite,
That sports by wood or water,
On th' bonny banks of Ayr to meet,
And keep this Fête Champêtre.

V.

Cauld Boreas, wi' his boisterous crew,
Were bound to stakes like kye, man:
And Cynthia's car, o' silver fu',
Clamb up the starry sky, man:
Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
Or down the current shatter;
The western breeze steals thro' the trees,
To view this Fête Champêtre.

VI.

How many a robe sae gaily floats!
What sparkling jewels glance, man!
To Harmony's enchanting notes,
As moves the mazy dance, man.
The echoing wood, the winding flood,
Like paradise did glitter,
When angels met, at Adam's yett,
To hold their Fête Champêtre.

VII.

When Politics came there, to mix
And make his ether-stane, man!
He circled round the magic ground,
But entrance found he nane, man:*
He blush'd for shame, he quat his name,
Forswore it, every letter,
Wi' humble prayer to join and share
This festive Fête Champêtre.

["The occasion of this ballad was as follows:—when Mr. Cunninghame, of Enterkin, came to his estate, two mansion-houses on it, Enterkin and Annbank, were both in a ruinous state. Wishing to introduce himself with some *éclat* to the country, he got temporary erections made on the banks of Ayr, tastefully decorated with shrubs and flowers, for a supper and ball, to which most of the respectable families in the county were invited. It was a novelty in the county, and attracted much notice. A dissolution of Parliament was soon expected, and this festivity was thought to be an introduction to a canvass for representing the county.—Several other candidates were spoken of, particularly Sir John Whitefoord, then residing at Cloncaird, commonly pronounced Glencaird, and Mr. Boswell, the well-known biographer of Dr. Johnson. The political views of this festive assemblage, which are alluded to in the ballad, if they ever existed, were however laid aside, as Mr. C. did not canvass the county."—GILBERT BURNS.]

Here's a Health to them that's awa.

Tune—*Here's a Health to them that's awa.*

I.

HERE's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;

[* Alluding to a superstition, which represents adders as forming annually from their slough certain little annular stones of streaked colouring, which are occasionally found and the real origin of which is supposed by antiquaries to be Druidical.—CHAMBERS.]

And wha winna wish guid luck to our cause,
May never guid luck be their fa' !
It's guid to be merry and wise,
It's guid to be honest and true,
It's guid to support Caledonia's cause,
And bide by the buff and the blue.

II.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to Charlie * the chief of the clan,
Altho' that his band be but sma'.
May liberty meet wi' success !
May prudence protect her frae evil !
May tyrants and tyranny tine in the mist,
And wander their way to the devil !

III.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa ;
Here's a health to Tammie † the Norland laddie,
That lives at the lug o' the law !
Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write! [heard
There's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be
But they wham the truth wad indite.

IV.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa, [gowd,
Here's Chieftain M'Leod, ‡ a chieftain worth
Tho' bred amang mountains o' snaw !
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa ;
And wha winna wish guid luck to our cause,
May never guid luck be their fa' ! §

[The buff and blue of Whiggery had triumphed over the white rose of Jacobitism in the heart of Burns when he composed this song. It is a sort of parody on a song in the Museum, and was found among his papers after his decease.

" Here's a health to them that's away,
Here's a health to them that's away,
Here's a health to them that were here short syne,
But canna be here the day.
It's guid to be merry and wise,
It's good to be honest and true ;
It's guid to be aff wi' the auld luve
Before ye be on wi' the new."

These two verses form part of a Jacobite song, with verbal alterations by Burns himself.]

Meg o' the Mill. ‖

Tune—*Jockie Hume's Lament.*

O KEN ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten ?
A braw new naig wi' the tail o' a rottan,
And that's what Meg o' the mill has gotten.
O ken ye what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly ?
A dram o' guid strunt in a morning early,
And that's what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly.

O ken ye how Meg o' the mill was married,
And ken ye how Meg o' the mill was married ?
The priest he was oxter'd, the clerk he was carried,
And that's how Meg o' the mill was married.
O ken ye how Meg o' the mill was bedded,
An' ken ye how Meg o' the mill was bedded ?
The groom gat sae fou, he fell twa-fauld beside it,
And that's how Meg o' the mill was bedded.

The Dumfries Volunteers. ¶

Tune—*Push about the Jorum.*

I.

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat ?
Then let the louns beware, Sir ;
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir.
The Nith shall rin to Corsincon,
The Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally !

We'll ne'er permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally.

* The Right Hon. Charles James Fox.
† Thomas, afterwards Lord, Erskine.
‡ M'Leod, chief of that clan.
§ [In the original MS. the termination of this song is as follows :—

" Here's friends on both sides of the Forth,
And friends on both sides of the Tweed ;
And wha wad betray old Albion's rights,
May they never eat of her bread !"]

‖ [This is founded on an old ditty which the Poet altered and trimmed up for Johnson's "Musical Museum." Another version of it he subsequently furnished to Mr. Thomson, to the air of *O bonnie Lass, will ye lie in a Barrack*, which will be seen in his correspondence with that gentleman.]

¶ ["Previous to one of the public meetings of this body—a regular field-day, which was to terminate in a grand dinner—it was hinted to the Bard that something would be expected from him in the shape of a song or speech—some glowing tribute in honour of the patriotic cause that had linked them together, and eke in honour of the martial glory of old Scotland. The Poet said nothing, but, as silence gives consent, it was generally expected that he would *shore* them on the occasion of the approaching festival with another lyric or energetic oration. The day at length arrived: dinner came and passed, and the usual loyal toasts were drunk with all the honours. Now came the Poet's turn; every eye was fixed upon him, and, slowly lifting his glass, he stood up and looked around him with an arch indescribable expression of countenance. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'may we never see the French, nor the French see us !' The toast fell like a 'wet blanket,' as Moore says, on the hopes of the volunteers. 'Is that a' ?' they muttered one to another, dropping down to their seats (to use the words of my informant, who was present) 'like so many old wives at a field-preaching !' 'Is that the grand speech or fine poem that we were to have from him ?—but we could hae expected nae better !' Not a few, however, 'raxed their jaws,' as the Ettrick Shepherd says, at the homely truth and humour of the Poet's sentiment, heightened by the first rueful aspect of the company; and, long after, in his jovial moments, Burns used to delight in telling how he had cheated the volunteers of Dumfries."—CARRUTHERS.]

II.

O let us not, like snarling curs,
In wrangling be divided;
Till, slap! come in an unco loun,
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!
For ne'er, &c.

III.

The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loun
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our fathers' bluid the kettle bought;
And wha wad dare to spoil it?
By heavens! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!
By Heavens, &c.

IV.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch, his true-sworn brother,
Wha would set the mob aboon the throne,
May they be damn'd together!
Wha will not sing, "God save the King,"
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing, "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget the People.*
But while we sing, &c.

[The above song was written in April, 1795. The Poet sent it to Mr. Jackson, editor of the Dumfries Journal, by whom it was first published. It also appears in the sixth volume of the "Museum," published nearly seven years after the Poet's death.]

The Winter of Life.

Tune—*Gil Morice.*

I.

But lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoic'd the day;
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

II.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe,
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
Sinks in Time's wintry rage.
Oh! age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why com'st thou not again?

[Though Burns gave much of his musing-time to the work of Thomson, in 1794 & 5 he did not neglect his earlier friend, Johnson, but contributed new as well as amended lyrics from time to time, and took a lively interest in the success of the work. "The Winter of Life," is one of those communications.

"Perhaps," says the Poet to the publisher of the 'Museum,' in 1788, "you may not find your account lucratively in this business; but you are a patriot for the music of your country; and I am certain posterity will look on themselves as highly indebted to your public spirit. Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild-goose-chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her qualities, such as whether she be rather black, or fair; plump or thin; short or tall, &c.: and choose your air, and I shall task my muse to celebrate her." It is not known what reply Johnson made to the latter part of this epistle: he was a plain, blunt man, and cared little about the graces of song, or the melody of music, save in the way of his trade.]

To Mary.

Tune—*Could aught of Song.*

I.

Could aught of song declare my pains,
Could artful numbers move thee,
The muse should tell, in labour'd strains,
O Mary, how I love thee!
They who but feign a wounded heart
May teach the lyre to languish;
But what avails the pride of art,
When wastes the soul with anguish?

II.

Then let the sudden bursting sigh
The heart-felt pang discover;
And in the keen, yet tender, eye,
O read th' imploring lover.
For well I know thy gentle mind
Disdains art's gay disguising;
Beyond what fancy e'er refin'd,
The voice of nature prizing.

* ["When the French threatened to invade this country in 1795, Burns enrolled himself among the gentlemen volunteers of Dumfries, and stood shoulder to shoulder with his friends Maxwell, Staig, and Syme. On going home he wrote 'The Dumfries Volunteers.' The song became popular at once, and was soon to be heard on hill and dale; for the peasantry of Scotland sing at the sheepfold and at the plough, and cheer themselves with verse in all ordinary pursuits of life. To extend its influence still farther, he had it printed with the music upon a separate sheet by Johnson, and thus it penetrated into the nobleman's drawing-room as well as into the farmer's spence.

"Some of the allusions are local, and require explanation. If Nith ran to Corsincon, it would run backward, and up hill too. The Criffel is a high green mountain on the Scottish side of the Solway, and is said, in the legends of the district, to be the materials which a witch had collected to choke up the sea, that the English army might walk over dry-shod."—CUNNINGHAM.]

[These tender verses seem to have been inspired as much by Hamilton's song of "Ah! the Shepherd's mournful Fate," as by the charms of Mary. The song is in the fifth volume of Johnson's Musical Museum, and was written for that work by Burns.]

The Highland Widow's Lament.

I.

Oh! I am come to the low countrie
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Without a penny in my purse,
To buy a meal to me.

II.

It was na sae in the Highland hills,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the country wide
Sae happy was as me.

III.

For then I had a score o' kye,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Feeding on yon hills so high,
And giving milk to me.

IV.

And there I had three score o' yowes,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Skipping on yon bonnie knowes,
And casting woo' to me.

V.

I was the happiest of a' the clan,
Sair, sair may I repine;
For Donald was the brawest man,
And Donald he was mine.

VI.

Till Charlie Steuart cam' at last,
Sae far to set us free;
My Donald's arm was wanted then
For Scotland and for me.

VII.

Their waefu' fate what need I tell,
Right to the wrang did yield:
My Donald and his Country fell
Upon Culloden-field.

VIII.

Ochon, O, Donald, Oh!
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the warld wide
Sae wretched now as me.*

Welcome to General Dumourier.

A Parady on Robin Adair.

I.

You're welcome to despots, Dumourier;
You're welcome to despots, Dumourier;
How does Dampiere, do?
Aye, and Bournonville, too?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumourier?

II.

I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you;
By my soul I'll dance a dance with you, Dumourier.

III.

Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about,
Till freedom's spark is out,
Then we'll be damn'd, no doubt, Dumourier.

[One day Burns happened to be in the King's Arms Inn, Dumfries, when he overheard a stranger vindicating the defection of General Dumourier from the ranks of the French army. The Poet presently began to croon words to the tune of Robin Adair, in a low tone of voice: on being asked what he was about, he said he was giving a welcome to General Dumourier, and repeated the above verses. They were inserted in Cromek's Reliques of Burns.]

* ["This song is said to be a homely version of a Highland lament for the ruin which followed the rebellion of the 'forty-five.' Burns heard it sung in one of his northern excursions, and begged a translation. It gives no exaggerated picture of the desolation wrought in the north by the Duke of Cumberland, whose atrocities made the prophecy of Peden be credited—'The day is at hand when a man may ride fifty miles in Scotland, and not see a reeking house, nor hear a crowing cock.' To subdue and root out rebellion was a duty; but 'Butcher Willie,' as the peasantry with great propriety called the duke in accomplishing this, was savage and remorseless. Smollett, who lived in those melancholy times, has given us a lasting picture of the sufferings of his country in his inimitable 'Tears of Scotland;' nor has Sir Walter Scott spared either sympathy for the sufferers, or reproaches on him who was so wantonly barbarous. The castles and homes of the rebels were given to the flames; their cattle driven away, and their wives and children were to be seen roaming, houseless and famishing, among the lonely glens and desolate moors of the north. The execution too of those taken in arms was, beyond all belief, barbarous; they were hung by the neck for five minutes, cut down before they were dead—their bosoms opened and their hearts torn out: several were observed by the bystanders to struggle with the executioner in performing the last part of this terrible tragedy. Human nature shudders at such proceedings; yet the public heart and eye of London must have been hardened that endured the exhibition of the ghastly heads of Lovat Balmerino, and Kilmarnock, on Temple Bar, for forty years and more!"—Cunningham.]

Bonnie Peg-a-Ramsay.

Tune—*Cauld is the E'enin' Blast.*

I.

CAULD is the e'enin' blast
O' Boreas o'er the pool,
And dawin' it is dreary
When birks are bare at Yule.

II.

O cauld blaws the e'enin' blast
When bitter bites the frost,
And in the mirk and dreary drift
The hills and glens are lost.

III.

Ne'er sae murky blew the night
That drifted o'er the hill,
But bonnie Peg-a-Ramsay
Gat grist to her mill.

[This short song was written by Burns for the "Museum," it is adapted to an old Scottish air, called "Bonnie Peg-a-Ramsay," and is as renowned in the amatory songs of the north as

"French Joan or English Mall"

are in the martial ballads of France and England. That she was beautiful, and condescending, the fragments of old song still bear evidence:—

"O bonnie Peg-a-Ramsay,
As a half-blin' man may see,
Has a sweet and sonsie look,
And a gleg and glenting e'e."]

There was a bonnie Lass.

AN UNFINISHED SKETCH.

I.

THERE was a bonnie lass,
And a bonnie, bonnie lass,
And she lo'ed her bonnie laddie dear;
Till war's loud alarms
Tore her laddie frae her arms,
Wi mony a sigh and a tear.

II.

Over sea, over shore,
Where the cannons loudly roar,
He still was a stranger to fear;
And nocht could him quail,
Or his bosom assail,
But the bonnie lass he lo'ed sae dear.

[Burns sometimes commenced a song, and, like Milton, "nothing pleased with what he had done," threw it aside, and addressed himself to some other subject or air, to which

"Words came skelpin' rank and file."

This is one of those unfinished snatches—yet not unworthy of preservation: Johnson, therefore, inserted it in the last volume of his "Museum." The words are adapted to the tune of a favourite slow march.]

O Mally's meek, Mally's sweet.

I.

As I was walking up the street,
A barefit maid I chanc'd to meet;
But O the road was very hard
For that fair maiden's tender feet.

O MALLY'S meek, Mally's sweet,
Mally's modest and discreet,
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
Mally's every way complete.

II.

It were mair meet, that those fine feet
Were weel lac'd up in silken shoon,
And 'twere more fit that she should sit
Within yon chariot gilt aboon.

III.

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
Comes trinkling down her swan-white neck;
And her two eyes, like stars in skies,
Would keep a sinking ship frae wreck.

O Mally's meek, Mally's sweet,
Mally's modest and discreet,
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
Mally's every way complete.

[The above was the last of all the communications of Burns to Johnson's Musical Museum. The Poet was one day walking along the High-street of Dumfries, when he met a young woman from the country, who, with her shoes and stockings packed carefully up, and her petticoats kilted,

"——— which did gently shaw
Her straight bare legs that whiter were than snaw,"

was proceeding towards the Galloway side of the Nith.

This sight, by no means so unusual then, as now, influenced the muse of Burns, and the result was this exquisite lyric.]

THE SONGS, AND CORRESPONDENCE OF BURNS WITH GEORGE THOMSON.

In the autumn of 1792, Thomson planned his truly elegant and adventurous work, entitled: "A select Collection of original Scottish Airs, for the Voice: to which are added Introductory and Concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Piano-forte and Violin, by Pleyel and Koseluck, with select and characteristic Verses by the most admired Scottish Poets;" and, as Burns was the only poet of that period worthy of the name, he was instantly applied to. He had contributed largely to the "Musical Museum" of Johnson, and was still composing for it: the work of Thomson presented something more worthy of his ambition, and he promised his aid with an enthusiasm and alacrity peculiar to himself. The songs were all to be published with the names of the authors; and, as the new lyrics were sure to be compared with those which they superseded, there was a two-fold claim upon the Poet for his purest and happiest musings.

"The undertaking of Thomson," says Currie, "is one on which the public may be congratulated in various points of view; not merely as having collected the finest of the Scottish songs and airs of past times, but as having given occasion to a number of original songs of our Bard, which equal or surpass the former efforts of the pastoral muses of Scotland; and which, if we mistake not, may be safely compared with the lyric poetry of any age or country. The letters of Burns to Thomson include the songs he presented to him, some of which appeared in different stages of their progress; and these letters will be found to exhibit occasionally his notions of song-writing, and his opinions on various subjects of taste and criticism. These opinions, it will be observed, were called forth by the observations of his correspondent; and without the letters of the latter, those of Burns would have been often unintelligible."

"The reasons which influenced Currie in printing the letters of Thomson along with those of the Poet are equally strong now. The opinions of Burns, though generally given spontaneously, were now and then forced from him by the criticisms of his friend: the former always thought and felt as a poet—the latter as a musician; one was chiefly solicitous about the weight of the sense—the other about the beauty of the sound. The poetry which is written for music must, it is true, be measured in another way than that which is for perusal only. The emphatic notes of the music must find an echo in the emphatic words of the verse; and words soft and liquid are far fitter for ladies' lips than words rough and hissing. It is nevertheless certain that language at once emphatic and harmonious is not easily summoned into lyric verse; and it is quite as true that, in substituting a melodious for a harsher word, the sentiment is often crushed out by the experiment. A certain happiness of language as well as of thought is demanded by the lyric muse, and no one had this in greater perfection than Burns."—Cunningham.

George Thomson, Esq.

Respecting this distinguished friend and correspondent of Burns, the following interesting Auto-biographical notice appears in the "Land of Burns," and is addressed to Robert Chambers, Esq., one of the Editors of that splendid work.

Trustees' Office, Edinburgh,
March 29th, 1838.

"Dear Sir,

"To your request that I should furnish you with a few particulars respecting my personal history, I really know not well what to say, because my life has been too unimportant to merit much notice. It is in connection with National Music and Song, and my correspondence on that subject with Burns, chiefly, that I can have any reasonable hope of being occasionally spoken of. I shall therefore content myself with a brief sketch of what belongs to my personal history, and then proceed to the subject of Scottish Music and Burns.

"I was born at Limekilns, in Fife, about the year 1759, as I was *informed*, for I can scarce believe I am so old. My father taught a school there, and having been invited, in that capacity, to the town of Banff, he carried me thither in my very early years, instructed me in the elementary branches of knowledge, and sent me to learn the dead languages at what was called the grammar school. He had a hard struggle to maintain an increasing family, and, after trying some mercantile means of enlarging

his income, without success, he moved with his family to Edinburgh, when I was about seventeen. In a short time I got into a Writer to the Signet's office as a Clerk, and remained in that capacity with him, and another W.S., till the year 1780, when, through the influence of Mr. John Home, Author of 'Douglas,' with one of the Members of the Honourable Board of Trustees, I was recommended to that Board, and became their Junior Clerk. Not long after, upon the death of their Principal Clerk, I succeeded to his situation, Mr. Robert Arbuthnot being then their Secretary; under whom, and afterwards under Sir William, his son and successor, I have served the Board for upwards of half a century; enjoying their fullest confidence, and the entire approbation of both Secretaries, whose gentlemanly manners and kind dispositions were such, (for I never saw a frown on their brows, nor heard an angry word escape from their lips) that I can say, with heart-felt gratitude to their memory, and to all my superiors, in this the 58th year of my Clerkship, that I never have felt the word servitude to mean any thing in the least mortifying or unpleasant, but quite the reverse.

"In my 25th year, I married Miss Miller, whose father was a Lieutenant in the 50th Regiment, and her mother the daughter of a most respectable gentleman in Berwick-shire, George Peter, Esq., of Chapel, and this was the wisest act of my life. She is happily still living, and has presented me with six daughters, and two sons, the elder of the two being now a Lieutenant-Colonel of Engineers, and the other an Assistant-Commissary-General.

"From my boyhood I had a passion for the sister arts of music and painting, which I have ever since continued to cherish, in the society of the ablest professors of both arts. Having studied the violin, it was my custom, after the hours of business, to con over our Scottish melodies, and to devour the choruses of Handel's oratorios; in which, when performed at St. Cecilia's hall, I generally took a part, along with a few other gentlemen, Mr. Alexander Wight, one of the most eminent counsel at the bar, Mr. Gilbert Innes, of Stow, Mr. John Russel, W.S., Mr. John Hutton, &c.; it being then not uncommon for grave amateurs to assist at the St. Cecilia concerts, one of the most interesting and liberal musical institutions that ever existed in Scotland, or indeed in any country. I had so much delight in singing those matchless chorusses, and in practising the violin quartettos of Pleyel and Haydn that it was with joy I hailed the hour when, like the young amateur in the good old Scotch song, I could hie me hame to my Cremona, and enjoy Haydn's admirable fancies.

'I still was pleas'd where'er I went, and when I was alone,
I screw'd my pegs and pleas'd myself with John o' Badenyon.'

"At the St. Cecilia concerts I heard Scottish songs sung in a style of excellence far surpassing any idea which I previously had of their beauty, and that, too, from *Italians*, Signor Tenducci the one, and Signora Domenica Corri the other. Tenducci's 'I'll never leave thee,' and 'Braes of Ballenden,' and the Signora's 'Ewebughts, Marion,' and 'Waly, waly,' so delighted every hearer that in the most crowded room not a whisper was to be heard, so entirely did they rivet the attention and admiration of the audience. Tenducci's singing was full of passion, feeling, and taste; and, what we hear very rarely from singers, his articulation of the words was no less perfect than his expression of the music. It was in consequence of my hearing him and Signora Corri sing a number of our songs, so charmingly, that I conceived the idea of collecting all our best melodies and songs, and of obtaining accompaniments to them worthy of their merit.

"On examining with great attention the various collections on which I could by any means lay my hands, I found them all more or less exceptionable, a sad mixture of good and evil, the pure and the impure. The melodies in general were without any symphonies to introduce and conclude them; and the accompaniments (for the piano only) meagre and common-place:—while the verses united with the melodies were in a great many instances coarse and vulgar, the productions of a rude age, and such as could not be tolerated or sung in good society.

"Many copies of the same melody both in print and manuscript, differing more or less from each other, came under my view: and after a minute comparison of copies, and hearing them sung over and over by such of my fair friends as I knew to be most conversant with them, I chose that set or copy of each air which I found the most simple and beautiful.

"For obtaining accompaniments to the Airs, and also Symphonies to introduce and conclude each air—a most interesting appendage to the airs that had not before graced any of the collections, I turned my eyes first on Pleyel, whose compositions were remarkably popular and pleasing: and afterwards, when I had resolved to extend my work into a complete collection of all the Airs that were worthy of preservation, I divided them in different portions, and sent them from time to time to Haydn, to Beethoven, to Weber, Hummell, &c., the greatest musicians then flourishing in Europe. These Artists, to my inexpressible satisfaction, proceeded *con amore* with their respective portions of the work, and in the Symphonies, which are original and characteristic creations of their own, as well as in their judicious and delicate accompaniments for the Piano-forte, and for the Violin, Flute, and Violoncello, they exceeded my most sanguine expectations, and

obtained the decided approval of the best judges. Their compositions have been pronounced by the Edinburgh Review to be wholly unrivalled for originality and beauty.

"The poetry became next the subject of my anxious consideration, and engaged me in a far more extensive Correspondence than I had ever anticipated, which occupied nearly the whole of my leisure for many years. For, although a small portion of the melodies had long been united with excellent songs, yet a much greater number stood matched with such unworthy associates as to render a divorce, and a new union, absolutely necessary.

"Fortunately for the melodies, I turned my eyes towards Robert Burns, who no sooner was informed of my plan and wishes, than, with all the frankness, generosity, and enthusiasm, which marked his character, he undertook to write whatever Songs I wanted for my work; but in answer to my promise of remuneration, he declared, in the most emphatic terms, that he would receive nothing of the kind! He proceeded with the utmost alacrity to execute what he had undertaken, and from the year 1792 till the time of his death, in 1796, I continued to receive his exquisitely beautiful compositions for the melodies I had sent him from time to time: and, in order that nothing should be wanting which might suit my work, he empowered me to make use of all the other songs that he had written for Johnson's Scots Musical Museum, &c. My work thus contains above One hundred and twenty of his inimitable songs; besides many of uncommon beauty that I obtained from Thomas Campbell, Professor Smyth, Sir Walter Scott, Joanna Baillie, and other admired Poets: together with the best songs of the olden time."

[The remainder of this communication, containing his defence against semi-anonymous slanderers, will be found at the close of the Correspondence.]

No. I.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, September, 1792.

SIR:

FOR some years past I have, with a friend or two, employed many leisure hours in selecting and collating the most favourite of our national melodies for publication. We have engaged Pleyel, the most agreeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air, the better to fit them for concerts, both public and private. To render this work perfect, we are desirous to have the poetry improved, wherever it seems unworthy of the music; and that it is so, in many instances, is allowed by every one conversant with our musical collections. The editors of these seem in general to have depended on the music proving an excuse for the verses; and hence, some charming melodies are united to mere nonsense and doggerel, while others are accommodated with rhymes so loose and indelicate as cannot be sung in decent company. To remove this reproach would be an easy task to the author of the "Cotter's Saturday Night;" and, for the honour of Caledonia, I would fain hope he may be induced to take up the pen. If so, we shall be enabled to present the public with a collection, infinitely more interesting than any that has yet appeared, and acceptable to all persons of taste, whether they wish for correct melodies, delicate accompaniments,—or characteristic verses.—We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it.—Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication. Tell me frankly, then, whether you will devote your leisure to writing twenty or twenty-five songs, suited to the particular melodies which I am prepared to send you. A few songs, exceptionable only in some of their verses, I will likewise submit to your consideration; leaving it to you either to mend these, or make new songs in their stead. It is superfluous to assure you that I have no intention to displace any of the sterling old songs; those only will be removed which appear quite silly, or absolutely indecent. Even these shall be all examined by Mr. Burns, and, if he is of opinion that any of them are deserving of the music, in such cases no divorce shall take place.

Relying on the letter accompanying this, to be forgiven for the liberty I have taken in addressing you, I am, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

G. THOMSON.

No. II.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Dumfries, 16th Sept. 1792.

SIR:

I HAVE just this moment got your letter. As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm.—Only, don't hurry me: "Deil tak the hindmost" is by no means the *cri de guerre* of my muse. Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may

occur to me? You know 'tis in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers to approve or reject, at your pleasure, for your own publication.—Apropos! if you are for English verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue. English verses, particularly the works of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. "Tweedside!"—"Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate!"—"Ah! Chloris, could I now but sit," &c. you cannot mend:—but such insipid stuff as "To Fanny fair could I impart," &c., usually set to "The Mill, Mill, O!" is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the farther prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say amendments; for I will not alter except where I myself, at least, think that I amend.

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c., would be downright prostitution* of soul! A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the wark!" I am, Sir, your very humble servant, R. BURNS.

P. S.—I have some particular reasons for wishing my interference to be known as little as possible.

["At the time of the commencement of this correspondence, Scottish songs were but little regarded. Ramsay's Miscellany was deformed by innumerable vulgarities: Herd's collection, though curious, was chiefly interesting to the antiquary; and Johnson's Museum, great as its merits were, both in verse and music, had not become popular. Thomson perceived this, and set about supplying the deficiency with considerable taste and skill. His chief ally was Burns. In music Pleyel ranks high, but no one can help feeling that his symphonies and accompaniments now and then encumber the music they were intended to adorn. The extreme simplicity of our northern airs is hurt by these embellishments, as a Doric temple would be injured by a Corinthian portico, or the Venus de Medici with bracelets of gold and diamonds on her arms, and drops at her ears."—CUNNINGHAM.]

[* We have been informed that Burns marked his loathing of remuneration by the use of even a stronger term than this, which was substituted by the original Editor.—CHAMBERS.]

No. III.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 13th Oct. 1792.

DEAR SIR:

I RECEIVED, with much satisfaction, your pleasant and obliging letter, and I return my warmest acknowledgments for the enthusiasm with which you have entered into our undertaking. We have now no doubt of being able to produce a collection highly deserving of public attention in all respects.

I agree with you in thinking English verses, that have merit, very eligible, wherever new verses are necessary; because the English becomes, every year, more and more the language of Scotland; but if you mean that no English verses, except those by Scottish authors, ought to be admitted, I am half inclined to differ from you. I should consider it unpardonable to sacrifice one good song in the Scottish dialect, to make room for English verses; but, if we can select a few excellent ones suited to the unprovided or ill-provided airs, would it not be the very bigotry of literary patriotism to reject such, merely because the authors were born south of the Tweed? Our sweet air, "My Nannie, O," which in the collections is joined to the poorest stuff that Allan Ramsay ever wrote, beginning, "While some for pleasure pawn their health," answers so finely to Dr. Percy's beautiful song, "O Nancy, wilt thou go with me," that one would think he wrote it on purpose for the air. However, it is not at all our wish to confine you to English verses: you shall freely be allowed a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it; and moreover, we will patiently await your own time. One thing only I beg, which is, that however gay and sportive the muse may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters. I do not conceive the song to be the most proper vehicle for witty and brilliant conceits: simplicity, I believe, should be its prominent feature; but, in some of our songs, the writers have confounded simplicity with coarseness and vulgarity; although between the one and the other, as Dr. Beattie well observes, there is as great a difference as between a plain suit of clothes and a bundle of rags. The humorous ballad, or pathetic complaint, is best suited to our artless melodies; and more interesting, indeed, in all songs, than the most pointed wit, dazzling descriptions, and flowery fancies.

With these trite observations, I send you eleven of the songs, for which it is my wish to substitute others of your writing. I shall soon transmit the rest, and, at the same time, a prospectus of the whole collection; and you

may believe we will receive any hints that you are so kind as to give, for improving the work, with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness.—

I remain, dear Sir, &c.

G. THOMSON.

No. IV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR:

LET me tell you that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just; the songs you specify in your list have, all but one, the faults you remark in them; but who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say—Go to, I will make a better? For instance, on reading over the "The Lea-rig," I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough:—

My ain kind Dearie, O.

Tune—"*The Lea-Rig.*

I.

When o'er the hill the eastern star
Tells bughtin-time is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrow'd field
Return sae dowf and weary, O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks *
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo;
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!

II.

In mirkest glen, at midnight hour,
I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie, O;
If thro' that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie, O!
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wild,†
And I were ne'er sae wearie, O,
I'd meet thee on thee lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!

III.

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It maks my heart sae cheery O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O! ‡

Your observation as to the aptitude of Dr Percy's ballad to the air, "Nannie, O," is just It is besides, perhaps, the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that in the sentiment and style of our Scottish airs there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, nay peculiarly, apposite. For this reason, and, upon my honour, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but, as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve or reject, as you please) that my ballad of "Nannie, O!" might perhaps do for one set of verses to the tune. Now don't let it enter into your head that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship; and have nothing to be pleased or offended at, in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your

* [VAR.—For "scented birks," in some copies, "birken buds."]

† ["In the copy transmitted to Mr. Thomson, instead of *wild*, was inserted *wet*. But in one of the manuscripts, probably written afterwards, wet was changed into wild—evidently a great improvement. The lovers might meet on the lea-rig, 'although the night were ne'er so *wild*,' that is, although the summer-wind blew, the sky lowered, and the thunder murmured; such circumstances might render their meeting still more interesting. But if the night were actually wet, why should they meet on the lea-rig? On a wet night, the imagination cannot contemplate their situation there with any complacency. Tibullus, and after him Hammond, has conceived a happier situation for lovers on a wet night. Probably Burns had in his mind the verse of an old Scottish song, in which *wet* and *weary* are naturally enough conjoined:

'When my ploughman comes hame at e'en,
He's often wet and weary:
Cast off the wet, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my deary.' "—CURRIE.]

‡ [The original or old name of this song was the *Ware-horse*. "Burns and Fergusson," says Mr. Buchan, "have exerted their skill to make words worthy of so fine an air; but my great grandmother's way ran thus:

'I hae been at the ware-horse,
Till I am wet and weary, O;
Cast off the wet, put on the dry,
Come to your bed, my deary, O.

I'll row you up, I'll row you down,
And row till I be weary, O:
I'll row you on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.

But how are ye sae bauld, sir,
And you my father's cotter, O;
As row me on the lea-rig,
And me his eldest dochter, O?

As row me up, and row me down,
And row till I be weary, O;
And row me on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.

Then tho' the night be ne'er sae dark
And I be wet and weary, O!
I'll hap you in my petticoat,
My ain kind deary, O.

Then row me up, and row me down,
And row till ye be weary, O;
And row me on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.'

"To those unacquainted with the term or name of ware-horse, it may be necessary to add, by way of explanation, that along the rocky and steep coast of the east of Scotland the adjoining lands were manured with a kind of sea-weed, called *ware*, which was carried on the backs of dwarf horses in wooden creels or curroches, and led by the young women belonging to the farm.—The men's duty was to gather it from the sea, load the horses, and afterwards spread it on the land."]

adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my "Nannie, O," the name of the river is horridly prosaic. I will alter it:

"Behind yon hills where Lugar flows."

Girvan is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but Lugar is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expense that it is ill able to pay: so, with my best compliments to honest Allan, Gude be wi' ye, &c. R. B.

Friday Night.

Saturday Morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you "Nannie, O!" at length. (vide p.347)

Your remarks on "Ewe-bughts, Marion," are just; still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and, what with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of "Ewe-bughts;" but it will fill up this page. You must know that all my earlier love-songs were the breathings of ardent passion, and though it might have been easy in after-times to have given them a polish, yet that polish, to me, whose they were, and who perhaps alone cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart, which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their race.

Will you go to the Indies, my Mary?

Tune—"*Ewe-bughts.*"

TO MARY CAMPBELL.

I.

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,*
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic's roar?

II.

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

III.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

IV.

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

V.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time! †

"Galla Water," and "Auld Rob Morris," I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on my verses, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is, not to stand aloof, the uncomplying bigot of *opiniâtreté*, but cordially to join issue with you in the furtherance of the work.

No. V.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

November 8th, 1792.

IF you mean, my dear Sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the undertaking than you are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity for adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the feature-notes of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air, "My wife's a wanton wee thing," if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect. The following were made extempore to it; and though, on farther study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink:—

My Wife's a winsome wee Thing.‡

I.

SHE is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,

---

* [The first line of this song seems to have been taken from an old Irish one, beginning,—

"Will ye go to Dublin, my Molly?"]

† [This song Mr. Thomson has not adopted in his collection. It deserves, however, to be preserved.—CURRIE.]

‡ [There are many sets of this old song on which this one is framed, to be found both in print and on the breath of tradition. In Herd's Collection, vol. ii. p. 230, we have the following version:—

"My wife's a wanton wee thing,
My wife's a wanton wee thing,
My wife's a wanton wee thing;
She'll never be guided by me.

She play'd the loon e'er she was married,
She play'd the loon e'er she was married,
She play'd the loon e'er she was married;
She'll do't again e'er she die."

The traditional copies celebrate the virtues and vices of a pigmy drunken wife.—M.]

She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

II.

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'ed a dearer;
And neist my heart I'll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine.

III.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

IV.

The warld's wrack we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't;
Wi' her I'll blythly bear it,
And think my lot divine.

I have just been looking over the "Collier's bonny Dochter;" and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day, on a charming Ayr-shire girl, Miss Lesley Baillie (afterwards Mrs. Cuming, of Logie), as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the "Collier Lassie,"—fall on and welcome:—

Bonnie Lesley.*

I.

O saw ye bonnie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

II.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

III.

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

IV.

The Deil he could na scaith thee,
Nor aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

V.

The powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune sha' na steer thee:
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

VI.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonnie.

I have hitherto deferred the sublimer, more pathetic airs, until more leisure, as they will take, and deserve, a greater effort. However, they are all put into your hands, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour.—Farewell, &c. R. B.

No. VI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Highland Mary.

Tune—*Katherine Ogie.*

I.

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfaulds her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

II.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk!
How rich the hawthorn's blossom!
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!

---

* [The last word in the third line of this song gave Mr. Thomson some uneasiness. He wished some other word to take the rank and precedence of Alexander; but Burns, true to his post, would not yield to the dictation of the critic. He perhaps was right; and, at any rate, can claim for precedent the great Marquis of Montrose, who, in one of his songs, says:—

"As Alexander I will reign,
And I will reign alone;
My thoughts did evermore disdain
A rival on my throne."

The Poet, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated August, 1792, describes the influence which the beauty of Miss Lesley Baillie exercised over his imagination. "Know then," said he, "that the heart-struck awe, the distant humble approach, the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour. Mr. Baillie, with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took my horse (though God knows I could ill spare the time,) and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them; and riding home, I composed the following ballad." You must know that there is an old one beginning with:—

My bonnie Lizzie Baillie,
I'll rowe thee in my plaidie, &c.

So I parodied it as above. R. B.

The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary!

III.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But, oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!—

Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

IV.

Oh pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly—
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary! *

* [In the notes to "My Highland Lassie, O," and "To Mary in Heaven," as well as in the Life of Burns, not a little has been said of Highland Mary, of whose loveliness and too early death the Poet sung with so much beauty and pathos. The following interesting particulars have been communicated by John Kerr, Esq., writer in Glasgow:—

"The parents of Highland Mary lived in Greenock, and she crossed the firth of Clyde to visit some relations in Cowal, previous to her marriage. Her father was a mariner; had two sons, Archibald and Robert; and, besides Mary, a daughter, named Anne, who married James Anderson, a stone-mason. All these individuals are now dead: Mary was not long outlived by her father and brothers: her mother died in great poverty in the year 1828. The representatives of Highland Mary, therefore, now consist of Anderson's children—two sons and two daughters. Mary, it appears, was not hurried to the grave immediately after her return from Cowal: she lived several weeks with her father, and every week received a letter from her lover. The circumstance of a girl in her humble condition receiving a letter weekly excited the curiosity of the neighbours: the secret was carefully hunted out, and one of the gossips informed her father and mother that Mary was in the habit of receiving letters from a person named Burns, who was known to be a strange character, and 'a great scoffer at women.' Mary was questioned on the subject, and admitted the correspondence, laughing heartily at the description of her lover, whose scoffing, she said, she was ready to trust to. After this, Mary was allowed to receive her letters openly: one of them, it appears, contained the song of 'The Highland Lassie, O;' for her mother got it by heart from the Poet's correspondence, and, in her declining years, soothed her grand-children with strains which recorded the charms of her favourite daughter.

"It is to be regretted that none of these letters are now in existence. After Mary's death, her father disliked all allusions to her or her lover; and when Burns wrote a moving letter, requesting some memorial of her he loved so dearly, the stern old man neither answered it, nor allowed any one to speak about it in his presence. His grand-children can sing some scraps of the songs which he wrote in the praise of their aunt; and these, save the Bible presented to her by the Poet, are all that the relatives of Highland Mary have to bear testimony of the love that was between her and Burns.

"Before the 'last farewell,' commemorated in the song of 'Highland Mary,' was taken, the lovers plighted mutual faith, and, exchanging Bibles, stood, with a running stream between, and, lifting up its waters in their hands, vowed love while the woods of Montgomery grew and its waters ran. The spot where this took place is still pointed out. Mary's Bible was of the commonest kind, and consisted of one volume only—that of Burns was elegantly bound, and consisted of two volumes. In the first volume he had written,—'And ye shall not swear by my name falsely—I am the Lord. Levit. chap. xix., v. 12.'—In the second—'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath. St. Matth. chap. v., v. 33;' and on a blank leaf of both volumes, 'Robert Burns, Mossgiel.' By the death of Mary, this Bible came into the possession of her mother, who, about twelve years ago, gave it to her only surviving daughter, Mrs. Anderson. The circumstance of its being in two volumes seemed, at one period, to threaten its dismemberment; for, upwards of five years since, Mrs. Anderson presented a volume to each of her two daughters; but on the approaching marriage of these two females sometime afterwards, her eldest son, William Anderson, a mason in Renton, prevailed upon each of his sisters to dispose of the volumes they had received to him; and thus both volumes, once more united, now remain in the custody of the senior nephew of Highland Mary. The sacred verses we have quoted above remain in the bold, distinct hand-writing of the Poet; but his signature, on the opposite leaves, is almost wholly obliterated. In the first volume, a masonic emblem, drawn by Burns, below his signature, is in complete preservation. Mr. William Anderson is also possessed of a pretty large lock of his aunt, Highland Mary's, hair, a portion of which he presented to us, as a relic of the Bard's first love.

"We now come to another era in the history of this Bible. Mr. Archibald, schoolmaster, in Largs, an admirer of Burns, and a votary of the Scottish muse, waited, it is said, on old widow Campbell, some time before her death, for the purpose of purchasing the volumes. He learnt, however, that she was a pauper on the roll of the Kirk Session of Greenock, who, in consequence, were entitled to take possession of her little property as soon as death removed her from this world; but in the mean time, to secure a right to them, he is said to have bargained with her that he should become the possessor of the volumes when that event took place, at such a price as might be agreed upon between him and the Session. In February last, Mr. Archibald, having heard that the Bible had found its way into the custody of one of the elders, presented the following memorial to the Session:—

"'Your Memorialist will not presume to dictate to your Reverend Body what you may or ought to do with the Bible. He takes leave, however, to say, that if you do not see fit to retain them as public property, estimable to the people of Greenock, in consequence of the historical circumstances connected with these volumes, having been within their locality, he, the Memorialist, will be proud to be one of those who will gladly come forward to offer you a handsome sum of money for behoof of the poor, for the possession of the Sacred Pledges of Burns' purest affection. He has no doubt that many will compete with him in the generous strife of obtaining the books, and that, if you see fit in this way to raise it, a considerable sum may be realized for the necessities of the poor.'

"On this memorial the Session pronounced the following judgment upon it:—

"'The Kirk Session of the Old Parish of Greenock, with their Heritors, being met—*inter alia*, the Kirk Treasurer laid before the meeting a letter from Mr. Joseph J. Archibald, teacher at Largs, containing an offer of £10 for the effects (including furniture, books, &c. &c.) left by widow Campbell, mother to Burns' Highland Mary, which effects became the property of the Kirk Session, in consequence of the said Widow Campbell being, for several years, a pauper on their roll. The Session agreed to resign their hypothec in said effects to and in favour of the said Mr. Joseph J. Archibald, for the aforesaid sum of £10, and authorize their clerk to intimate this to him.'

"Notwithstanding the grave and formal tenor of this resolution, we suspect that the Bible is the unquestionable property of its present possessor, and, if the account we have received of his character and conduct approach the truth, he is well worthy of remaining their custodier in perpetuity."]

[Mr. Joseph J. Archibald, alluded to in the preceding narrative, had the Bibles for a considerable time in his possession, and deposited them, along with a lock of Mary's hair, for some time in the hands of Mr. Crawford, Dalry, Ayr-shire, who still retains a small portion of the hair. Archibald was afterwards in the employment of Dr. Kirk, late of Greenock, now of Glasgow, where he fell ill, and his mother went from Dalry to nurse him. On his death, inquiry was made after the Bibles, but they were no where to be found. It is therefore impossible to say into whose possession these precious relics have found their way.]

14th November, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

I AGREE with you that the song, "Katherine Ogie," is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy, of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it; but the awkward sound, Ogie, recurring so often in the rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece. The foregoing song pleases myself; I think it is in my happiest manner: you will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would ensure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition.

I have partly taken your idea of "Auld Rob Morris." I have adopted the first two verses, and am going on with the song on a new plan, which promises pretty well. I take up one or another, just as the bee of the moment buzzes in my bonnet-lug; and do you, *sans ceremonie*, make what use you choose of the productions.—Adieu, &c. R. B.

No. VII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, Nov. 1792.

DEAR SIR:

I WAS just going to write to you, that on meeting with your Nannie, I had fallen violently in love with her. I thank you, therefore, for sending the charming rustic to me, in the dress you wish her to appear before the public. She does you great credit, and will soon be admitted into the best company.

I regret that your song for the "Lea-rig" is so short; the air is easy, soon sung, and very pleasing: so that, if the singer stops at the end of two stanzas, it is a pleasure lost ere it is well possessed.*

Although a dash of our native tongue and manners is doubtless peculiarly congenial and appropriate to our melodies, yet I shall be able to present a considerable number of the very Flowers of English Song, well adapted to these melodies, which, in England at least, will be the means of recommending them to still greater attention than they have procured there. But, you will observe, my plan is, that every air shall in the first place have verses wholly by Scottish poets; and that those of English writers shall follow as additional songs, for the choice of the singer.

* ["The fashion of the day, however, is short songs. At present nothing can be tolerated in the way of a song above a couple of stanzas."—MOTHERWELL.]

What you say of the "Ewe-bughts" is just; I admire it, and never meant to supplant it.—All I requested was, that you would try your hand on some of the inferior stanzas, which are apparently no part of the original song; but this I do not urge, because the song is of sufficient length, though those inferior stanzas be omitted, as they will be by the singer of taste. You must not think I expect all the songs to be of superlative merit: that were an unreasonable expectation. I am sensible that no poet can sit down doggedly to pen verses, and succeed well, at all times.

I am highly pleased with your humorous and amorous rhapsody on "Bonnie Lesley;" it is a thousand times better than the "Collier's Lassie." "The deil he cou'd na scaith thee," &c. is an eccentric and happy thought. Do you not think, however, that the names of such old heroes as Alexander sound rather queer, unless in pompous or mere burlesque verse? Instead of the line, "And never made anither," I would humbly suggest, "And ne'er made sic anither," and I would fain have you substitute some other line for "Return to Caledonie," in the last verse, because I think this alteration of the orthography, and of the sound of Caledonia, disfigures the word, and renders it Hudibrastic.

Of the other song—"My Wife's a Winsome wee Thing," I think the first eight lines very good: but I do not admire the other eight, because four of them are a bare repetition of the first verse. I have been trying to spin a stanza, but could make nothing better than the following: do you mend it, or, as Yorick did with the love-letter, whip it up in your own way:—

O leeze me on my wee thing,
My bonnie blithsome wee thing;
Sae lang 's I hae my wee thing,
I'll think my lot divine.

Tho' warld's care we share o't,
And may see meikle mair o't,
Wi' her I'll blithely bear it,
And ne'er a word repine.

You perceive, my dear Sir, I avail myself of the liberty, which you condescend to allow me, by speaking freely what I think. Be assured, it is not my disposition to pick out the faults of any poem or picture I see: my first and chief object is to discover and be delighted with the beauties of the piece. If I sit down to examine critically, and at leisure, what, perhaps, you have written in haste, I may happen to observe careless lines, the re-perusal of which might lead you to improve them. The wren will often see what has been overlooked by the eagle.—I remain yours faithfully, &c. G. T.

P.S. Your verses upon "Highland Mary" are just come to hand; they breathe the genuine

spirit of poetry, and, like the music, will last for ever. Such verses, united to such an air, with the delicate harmony of Pleyel superadded, might form a treat worthy of being presented to Apollo himself. I have heard the sad story of your Mary: you always seem inspired when you write of her.

No. VIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Dumfries, 1st Dec. 1792.

YOUR alterations of my "Nannie, O," are perfectly right. So are those of "My Wife's a winsome wee thing." Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement. Now, my dear sir, with the freedom which characterizes our correspondence, I must not, cannot, alter "Bonnie Lesley." You are right, the word "Alexander" makes the line a little uncouth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of Scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

"For nature made her what she is,
And never made anither." (Such a person as she is.)

This is, in my opinion, more poetical than "Ne'er made sic anither." However, it is immaterial: make it either way.* "Caledonie," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay; but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I have ever tried.

The "Lea-rig" is as follows.—(Here the Poet repeats the first two stanzas, and adds an additional one. The whole of the song has been given in No. IV.)

I am interrupted. Yours, &c.

No. IX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Auld Rob Morris.

I.

THERE'S auld Rob Morris that wons in yon glen,
He's the king o' guid fellows and wale of auld men;
He has gowd in his coffers, he has owsen and kine,
And ae bonnie lassie, his darling and mine.

II.

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May;
She's sweet as the ev'ning amang the new hay;
As blythe and as artless as lambs on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

III.

But oh! she's an heiress,—auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has nought but a cot-house and yard;
A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed;
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.

IV.

The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane:
I wander my lane like a night-troubl'd ghaist,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

V.

O had she but been of a lower degree, me!
I then might hae hop'd she'd hae smil'd upon me!
O, how past descriving had then been my bliss,
As now my distraction no words can express!

[The first two lines are taken from an old Ballad—the rest is wholly original.—CURRIE.

The old song is as follows:—

"There's auld Rob Morris that wons in yon glen,
He's the king o' guid fellows, and the wale o' auld men;
He has kye in his byres, and yowes on the brae;
And auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun hae.

Dear father, he's doited, a shame to be seen;
And what can he do wi' a lass o' nineteen!
He's outshinn'd and inshinn'd, and single-e'ed too,
And auld Rob Morris I never can lo'e.

But auld Rob Morris he is a guid laird,
And your daddy has nought but a cot-house and yard,
He's a heel, and a hale, and a proper auld man,
And his auld brass will buy you new pan.

But auld Rob Morris I never will hae,
His back is sae stiff, and his beard is grown grey;
I rather wad die than live with him a year,
Sae mair of Rob Morris I never will hear."

Duncan Gray.

I.

DUNCAN Gray cam' here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

* [The original reading of the second verse in "Bonnie Lesley," the reader will observe, is restored in the text. Thomson decided in favour of the prosaic line,

"And ne'er made sic anither;"

rejecting the more poetic one,

"And never made anither."

Burns often adopted emendations in which his better judgment did not concur, because they were pressed by his correspondent, to whose skill in the art of adapting words to music he looked with great confidence.]

Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

II.

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,*
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer't and blin',
Spak' o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

III.

Time and chance are but a tide;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Slighted love is sair to bide;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

IV.

How it comes let doctors tell;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Meg grew sick—as he grew heal;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

V.

Duncan was a lad o' grace;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Maggie's was a piteous case;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and canty baith;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

4th December, 1792.

The foregoing I submit, my dear sir, to your better judgment. Acquit them, or condemn them, as seemeth good in your sight. Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.

[This song has nothing in common with the old wild song of "Duncan Gray," save the first line, and a part of the third. It is a great favourite, from its lively air and clever words: Wilkie made one of his best pictures out of these lines:—

"Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha! ha! the wooing o't."]

* A well-known rock in the Firth of Clyde.

No. X.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Song.

Tune—*I had a Horse.*

I.

O POORTITH cauld, and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
An 'twere na' for my Jeannie.

O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on fortune's shining?

II.

This warld's wealth when I think on,
Its pride, and a' the lave o't—
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't!

III.

Her een sae bonnie blue betray
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her o'erword aye,
She talks of rank and fashion.

IV.

O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?

V.

How blest the humble cotter's fate! *
He woos his simple dearie;
The silly bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make them eerie.

O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining!
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on fortune's shining?

[The heroine of this exquisite song was Jean Lorimer of Kemmis-hall, in Kirkmahoe. It is plain that the Poet looked upon her with the same eyes that a painter looks upon a model: her beauty of face and elegance of form—

"Her dimpled chin and cherry mou'—"

* "The wild-wood Indian's fate," in the original MS.

her ready wit, and her natural gaiety—her taste in song, and her skill in the dance, all united in endearing her to one whose muse caught inspiration from the presence of youth and beauty.]

Galla Water.

I.

THERE'S braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander thro' the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes nor Ettrick shaws
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

II.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I lo'e him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonnie lad o' Galla Water.

III.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meikle tocher;
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla Water.

IV.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure!

Jan. 1793.

Many returns of the season to you, my dear Sir. How comes on your publication? will these two foregoing be of any service to you? I should like to know what songs you print to each tune, besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade, and a man in the way of his trade may suggest useful hints, that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much-valued Cunningham, greet him, in my name, with the compliments of the season.—Yours, &c.

[The Poet had in his thoughts an old song which he brushed up for the Museum when he composed these verses. The feeling of the old so fairly mastered him that in the third verse he has been careless in the matter of rhyme, and contented himself with something like equality of sound. The Galla rises in Mid-Lothian, unites with Heriot Water, and passing Galashiels, is lost in the Tweed, near Abbotsford. It has long flowed in the light of song and romance:

"Lothian lads are black wi' reck,
Teviot-dale is little better;
But let them a' say what they will,
The gree gangs ay down Galla Water."

We subjoin the old song of "Galla Water."

"Braw, braw lads of Galla Water,
O braw lads of Galla Water:
I'll kilt my coats up to my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.
Sae fair her hair, sae brent her brow,
Sae bonnie blue her een, my deary,
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou',
I aften kiss her till I'm weary.

O'er yon bank, and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather,
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.
Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my deary;
The lassy lost her silken snood,
That gar'd her greet till she was weary."]

No. XI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, Jan. 20, 1793.

YOU make me happy, my dear Sir, and thousands will be happy to see the charming songs you have sent me. Many merry returns of the season to you, and may you long continue, among the sons and daughters of Caledonia, to delight them and to honour yourself.

The last four songs with which you favoured me, viz. "Auld Rob Morris," "Duncan Gray," "Galla Water," and "Cauld Kail," are admirable. Duncan is indeed a lad of grace, and his humour will endear him to every body.

The distracted lover in "Auld Rob," and the happy shepherdess in "Galla Water," exhibit an excellent contrast: they speak from genuine feeling, and powerfully touch the heart.

The number of songs which I had originally in view was limited; but I now resolve to include every Scotch air and song worth singing; leaving none behind but mere gleanings, to which the publishers of *omne-gatherum* are welcome. I would rather be the editor of a collection from which nothing could be taken away, than of one to which nothing could be added. We intend presenting the subscribers with two beautiful stroke engravings; the one characteristic of the plaintive, and the other of the lively, songs; and I have Dr. Beattie's promise of an essay upon the subject of our national music, if his health will permit him to write it. As a number of our songs have doubtless been called forth by particular events, or by the charms of peerless damsels, there must be many curious anecdotes relating to them.

The late Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, I believe, knew more of this than any body; for he joined to the pursuits of an antiquary a taste

for poetry, besides being a man of the world, and possessing an enthusiasm for music beyond most of his contemporaries. He was quite pleased with this plan of mine, for I may say it has been solely managed by me, and we had several long conversations about it when it was in embryo. If I could simply mention the name of the heroine of each song, and the incident which occasioned the verses, it would be gratifying. Pray, will you send me any information of this sort, as well with regard to your own songs, as the old ones?

To all the favourite songs of the plaintive or pastoral kind, will be joined the delicate accompaniments, &c., of Pleyel. To those of the comic and humourous class, I think accompaniments scarcely necessary; they are chiefly fitted for the conviviality of the festive board, and a tuneful voice, with a proper delivery of the words, renders them perfect. Nevertheless, to these I propose adding bass accompaniments, because then they are fitted either for singing, or for instrumental performance, when there happens to be no singer. I mean to employ our right trusty friend Mr. Clarke, to set the bass to these, which he assures me he will do *con amore*, and with much greater attention than he ever bestowed on anything of the kind. But for this last class of airs I will not attempt to find more than one set of verses.

That eccentric bard, Peter Pindar, has started I know not how many difficulties about writing for the airs I sent to him, because of the peculiarity of their measure, and the trammels they impose on his flying Pegasus. I subjoin for your perusal the only one I have yet got from him, being for the fine air "Lord Gregory." The Scots verses, printed with that air, are taken from the middle of an old ballad, called "The Lass of Lochroyan," which I do not admire.* I have set down the air, therefore, as a creditor of yours. Many of the Jacobite songs are replete with wit and humour: might not the best of these be included in our volume of comic songs?

POSTSCRIPT.

FROM THE HON. A. ERSKINE.

Mr. Thomson has been so obliging as to give me a perusal of your songs. "Highland Mary" is most enchantingly pathetic, and "Duncan Gray" possesses native genuine humour: "Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn," is a line of itself that should make you immortal. I sometimes hear of you from our mutual friend Cunningham, who is a most excellent fellow, and possesses, above all men I know, the charm of a most obliging disposition. You kindly promised me, about a year ago, a collection of your unpublished productions, religious and amorous; I know from experience how irksome it is to copy. If you will get any trusty person in Dumfries to write them over fair, I will give Peter Hill whatever money he asks for his trouble, and I certainly shall not betray your confidence.

I am your hearty admirer,

Andrew Erskine.

No. XII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

26th January, 1793.

I approve greatly, my dear Sir, of your plans. Dr. Beattie's essay will of itself be a treasure. On my part I mean to draw up an appendix to the Doctor's essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c., of our Scots songs. All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him, from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast that, in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, "Lochaber" and the "Braes of Ballenden" excepted. So far as the locality either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of Jacobite songs; but would it give no offence? In the mean time, do not you think that some of them, particularly "The Sow's Tail to Geordie," as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a *naïveté*, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and, I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste) with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work. His "Gregory" is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which

[" Mr. Thomson is not remarkable for the correctness of his taste in regard to old Scottish ballads. The 'Lass of Lochroyan' is, we think, an instance in point."—Motherwell.]

It is one of the most beautiful compositions in the language.—Cunningham.

are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter; that would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it.

Lord Gregory.

I.

O MIRK, mirk is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempest's roar;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tow'r—
Lord Gregory, ope thy door!

II.

An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;
At least some pity on me shaw,
If love it may na be.

III.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove,
By bonnie Irwin-side,
Where first I own'd that virgin-love
I lang, lang had denied?

IV.

How aften didst thou pledge and vow
Thou wad for aye be mine;
And my fond heart, itsel' sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

V.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast—
Thou dart of heaven that flashest by,
O wilt thou give me rest!

VI.

Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see!
But spare, and pardon my fause love,
His wrangs to heaven and me!

My most respectful compliments to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a Postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and receive his MSS. soon. R. B.

[The following are two of the stanzas of "Fair Annie of Lochroyan:"—

"Sweet Annie built a bonnie ship,
And set her on the sea,
The sails were of the damask'd silk,
The masts of silver free:
The gladsome waters sung below,
The sweet winds sung above,
Make way for Annie of Lochroyan,
She comes to seek her love!

A gentle wind came with a sweep,
And stretch'd her silken sail,
When up there came a reaver rude,
With many a shout and hail;
O! touch her not, my mariners a',
Such loveliness goes free;
Make way for Annie of Lochroyan,
She seeks Lord Gregorie!"

Wolcot complained, with many an oath, that Burns sought to rob him of the original merit of Lord Gregory. His song was, indeed, composed first, but the idea of both is borrowed from the old strain. The following is Wolcot's version:—

LORD GREGORY.

"Ah ope, Lord Gregory, thy door!
A midnight wanderer sighs,
Hard rush the rains, the tempests roar,
And lightnings cleave the skies.

Who comes with woe at this drear night—
A pilgrim of the gloom?
If she whose love did once delight,
My cot shall yield her room.

Alas! thou heard'st a pilgrim mourn
That once was priz'd by thee;
Think of the ring by yonder burn
Thou gav'st to love and me.

But should'st thou not poor Marian know,
I'll turn my feet and part;
And think the storms that round me blow
Far kinder than thy heart."]

No. XIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

20th March, 1793.

Mary Morison.

Tune—*Bide ye yet.*

I.

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison

II.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:

* ["Of all the productions of Burns, the pathetic and serious love-songs which he has left behind him, in the manner of the old ballads, are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to Mary Morison, those entitled 'Jessy,' and the song beginning 'O, my love is like a red, red rose.'"—HAZLITT.]

Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said, amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

III.

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

MY DEAR SIR:

The song prefixed is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable, either for its merits or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stinted powers) to be always original, entertaining, and witty.

What is become of the list, &c., of your songs? I shall be out of all temper with you by-and-by. I have always looked on myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot, bear rivalship from you, nor any body else. R. B.

No. XIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

March, 1793.

Wandering Willie.

I.

HERE awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ae only dearie, [same.
And tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the

II.

Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was na the blast brought the tear in my e'e:
Now welcome the simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

III.

Ye hurricanes, rest in the cave o' your slumbers!
O how your wild horrors a lover alarms!
Awaken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

IV.

But if he 's forgotten his faithfullest Nannie,
O still flow between us, thou wide roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain!

I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to determine whether the above, or the old "Thro' the lang muir," be the best. R. B.

[The idea of "Wandering Willie" is taken from an old song published by Herd, which commences in these words:—

"Here awa, there awa, here awa, Willie,
Here awa, there awa', here awa hame;
Long have I sought thee, dear have I bought thee,
Now I hae gotten my Willie again.

Through the lang muir I have followed my Willie,
Through the lang muir I have followed him hame,
Whatever betide us, nought shall divide us,
Love now rewards all my sorrow and pain."

Older words than these may still be heard "lilted" by a shepherd lad or lass on a pasture hill, or in some sequestered glen:—

"Gin that ye meet my love, kiss her and clap her,
An' gin ye meet my love, dinna think shame:
O gin ye meet my love, kiss her and daut her,
And show her the way to haud away hame."

The heroine of the "Wandering Willie" of Burns is said to have been the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Riddel.]

No. XV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Open the Door to me, Oh!

WITH ALTERATIONS.

I.

OH, open the door, some pity to show,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!*
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!

II.

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, Oh!
The frost that freezes the life at my heart
Is nought to my pains frae thee, Oh!

III.

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is setting with me, Oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, Oh!

IV.

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide;
She sees his pale corse on the plain, Oh! [side,
My true love! she cried, and sank down by his
Never to rise again, Oh!

I do not know whether this song be really mended. R. B.

* This second line was originally—"If love it may na be, Oh!"

No. XVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Young Jessie.

Tune—*Bonnie Dundee.*

I.

TRUE-hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the Ayr,
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair:
To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain;
Grace, beauty, and elegance, fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

II.

O, fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law:
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger—
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a'!

[Jesse Staig, the heroine of this song, was the daughter of Provost Staig of Dumfries, and married to Major Miller, the second son of the Laird of Dalswinton. She died in early life, and is still affectionately remembered in her native valley:—the memory of beauty and gentleness is long passing away.]

No. XVII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 2nd April, 1793.

I WILL not recognise the title you give yourself, "the prince of *indolent* correspondents;" but if the adjective were taken away, I think the title would then fit you exactly. It gives me pleasure to find you can furnish anecdotes with respect to most of the songs: these will be a literary curiosity.

I now send you my list of the songs, which I believe will be found nearly complete. I have put down the first lines of all the English songs which I propose giving in addition to the Scotch verses. If any others occur to you, better adapted to the character of the airs, pray mention them, when you favour me with your strictures upon every thing else relating to the work.

Pleyel has lately sent me a number of the songs, with his symphonies and accompaniments added to them. I wish you were here, that I might serve up some of them to you with your own verses, by way of dessert after dinner. There is so much delightful fancy in the symphonies, and such a delicate simplicity in the accompaniments—they are, indeed, beyond all praise.

I am very much pleased with the several last productions of your muse: your "Lord Gregory," in my estimation, is more interesting than Peter's, beautiful as his is. Your "Here awa, Willie," must undergo some alterations to suit the air. Mr. Erskine and I have been conning it over: he will suggest what is necessary to make them a fit match.* The gentleman I have mentioned, whose fine taste you are no stranger to, is so well pleased, both with the musical and poetical part of our work, that he has volunteered his assistance, and has already written four songs for it, which, by his own desire, I send for your perusal. G. T.

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* [Thomson and Erskine, it seems, sat in judgment upon "Wandering Willie," and, in harmonizing it to the air, squeezed much of the poetic spirit out:—they re-produced it in these words:—

"Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my e'e,
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie,
As simmer to nature, so Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave o' your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Blow soft,* ye breezes! roll gently, ye billows!
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou dark-heaving† main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
While dying I think‡ that my Willie's my ain."

Burns, with his usual judgment, adopted some of these alterations, and rejected others.

"Several of the alterations seem to be of little importance in themselves, and were adopted, it may be presumed, for the sake of suiting the words better to the music. The Homeric epithet for the sea, dark-heaving, suggested by Mr. Erskine, is in itself more beautiful, as well, perhaps, as more sublime, than wide-roaring, which he has retained; but as it is only applicable to a placid state of the sea, or at most to the swell left on its surface after the storm is over, it gives a picture of that element not so well adapted to the ideas of eternal separation which the fair mourner is supposed to imprecate. From the original song of 'Here awa, Willie,' Burns has borrowed nothing but the second line and part of the first. The superior excellence of this beautiful poem will, it is hoped, justify the different editions of it which we have given."—CURRIE.]

* VAR.—Wauken. R. B.

† VAR.—Wide-roaring.—MS.—R. B.

‡ VAR.—But dying believe.—MS.—R. B.

No. XVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

The poor and honest Sodger.

Air—*The Mill, Mill, O!*

I.

When wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning ;*
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

II.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder,
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
I cheery on did wander.
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon† the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

III.

At length I reach'd the bonny glen
Where early life I sported ;
I pass'd the mill, and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted :
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,‡
Down by her mother's dwelling !
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling.

IV.

Wi' alter'd§ voice, quoth I, Sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O ! happy, happy may he be,
That 's dearest to thy bosom !
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain wad be thy lodger ;
I've serv'd my king and country lang—
Take pity on a sodger.

V.

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was|| than ever ;
Quo' she, a sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never :
Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it,
That gallant badge—the dear cockade
Ye 're welcome for the sake o't.

VI.

She gaz'd—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale like ony lily ;¶
She** sank within my arms, and cried
Art thou my ain dear Willie ?
By Him who made yon sun and sky—
By whom true love 's regarded,
I am the man ; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded !

VII.

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted ;
Tho' poor in gear,†† we're rich in love,
And mair we'se ne'er be parted.
Quo' she, my grandsire left me gowd,‡‡
A mailen plenish'd fairly ;
And come, my faithful sodger§§ lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly !

VIII.

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor ;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honour :
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger ;
Remember he's his country's stay
In day and hour of danger.

[The air of this song and some of the words incline me to believe that Burns had "The mill, mill, O !" of Allan Ramsay in his mind, when he wrote it. But the verses of the elder bard are inferior to those of his great successor, and moreover the story they tell is far from delicate. The first four lines may be quoted without a blush :—

> "Beneath a green shade, I fand a fair maid
> Was sleeping sound and still, O ;
> A' lowing wi' love, my fancy did rove
> Around her wi' good will, O."

The four concluding lines belong to an older lyric :—

> "O the mill, mill, O, and the kiln, kiln, O !
> And the coggin o' the wheel, O ;
> The sack and the sieve a' thae ye maun leave,
> And round wi' a sodger reel, O."

"It is alleged by some," says Geddes, in his Saint's Recreation, written in 1760—and not without some colour of reason,—"that many of our good airs or tunes are made by good angels,

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* "And eyes again with pleasure beam'd,
That had been blear'd with mourning."

† Var.—And ay I min't.—MS.
‡ Var.—Lass.—MS.
§ Var.—Fremit.—MS.
|| Var.—Look'd.—MS.
¶ Var.—Syne swallow't like a lily.—MS.
** Var.—And.
†† Var.—Tho' wealth be sma'.—MS.
‡‡ Var.—Gear.
§§ Var.—Ain dear.—MS.

but the lines of our songs by devils." The words of the "Godly Geddes," were true of many of the old popular songs of Caledonia, and "The mill, mill, O!" among the number. The third and fourth lines of the first verse of the song of Burns, were altered thus by Thomson:—

"And eyes again with pleasure beam'd,
That had been bleared with mourning."

This change robbed the song of a natural and mournful image.

"The Poor and Honest Sodger" was sung in every vale, and on every hill; in every cot-house, village, and town: yet the man who wrote it was supposed by the mean and the spiteful to be no well-wisher to his country!—CUNNINGHAM.]

Meg o' the Mill.

Air—*Hey! bonnie lass, will you lie in a barrack?*

I.

O KEN ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof wi' a claut o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

II.

The Miller was strappin, the Miller was ruddy;
A heart like a lord and a hue like a lady:
The laird was a widdiefu', bleerit knurl;
She's left the guid-fellow and ta'en the churl.

III.

The Miller he hecht her a heart leal and loving;
The Laird did address her wi' matter mair moving,
A fine pacing horse wi' a clear chained bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonnie side-saddle.

IV.

O wae on the siller, it is sae prevailing;
And wae on the love that is fix'd on a mailen!
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parle,
But, gie me my love, and a fig for the warl'!

[Burns touched up the old song of "Meg o' the Mill" for Johnson's Museum. That version we have already given.

The license of a Scottish bridal—if we may believe the northern painters and poets—was very great: the revelry lasted three days and nights, according to Ramsay; and both David Allan and David Wilkie intimate that men and women's hearts over-flowed with joy:—

"Some were fu' o' love divine,
And others fu' o' brandy."]

No. XIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

7th April, 1793.

THANK you, my dear Sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c., ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race (God grant that I may take the right side of the winning-post!), and then, cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say, or sing, "Sae merry as we a' hae been," and, raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of Coila shall be "Good night, and joy be wi' you a'!" So much for my last words: now for a few present remarks, as they have occurred at random on looking over your list.

The first lines of "The last time I came o'er the moor," and several other lines in it, are beautiful; but in my opinion—pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay! the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to make or mend. "For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove," is a charming song; but "Logan Burn and Logan Braes" are sweetly susceptible of rural imagery: I'll try that likewise, and, if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of "Logan Water" (for I know a good many different ones), which I think pretty:—

"Now my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

"My Patie is a lover gay" is unequal. "His mind is never muddy," is a muddy expression indeed.

"Then I'll resign and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony!"

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay, or your book. My song, "Rigs of Barley," to the same tune, does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it and thrash a few loose sentiments out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. "The Lass o' Patie's Mill" is one of Ramsay's best songs; but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend, Mr. Erskine, will take into his critical consideration. In Sir J. Sinclair's Statistical volumes are two claims; one, I think, from Aberdeen-shire, and the other from Ayr-shire, for the honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, who had it of the late John, Earl of Loudon, I can, on such authorities, believe:—

Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon castle with the then Earl, father to Earl John; and one forenoon, riding, or walking out together, his Lordship and Allan passed a sweet, romantic spot on Irvine Water, still called "Patie's Mill," where a bonnie lass was "tedding hay, bare-headed, on the green." My Lord observed to Allan that it would be a fine theme for a song. Ramsay took the hint, and lingering behind, he composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

"One day I heard Mary say," is a fine song; but, for consistency's sake, alter the name "Adonis." Were there ever such banns published as a purpose of marriage between Adonis and Mary? I agree with you that my song, "There's nought but care on every hand," is much superior to "Poortith cauld." The original song, "The Mill, Mill, O," though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissible; still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow, as an English set. "The banks of the Dee" is, you know, literally, "Langolee," to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it; for instance,

"And sweetly the nightingale sung from the *tree*."

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen, or heard, on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. If I could hit on another stanza, equal to "The small birds rejoice," &c. I do myself honestly avow that I think it a superior song.* "John Anderson, my Jo," the song to this tune in Johnson's Museum is my composition, and I think it not my worst: if it suit you, take it and welcome. Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are "Tullochgorum," "Lumps o' puddin'," "Tibbie Fowler," and several others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation? There is also one sentimental song of mine in the Museum, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called "Craigieburn Wood;" and, in the opinion of Mr. Clarke, is one of the sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it; and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. "Shepherds, I have lost my love!" is to me a heavenly air—what would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it? I have made one to it a good while ago, but in its original state it is not quite a lady's song. I inclose an altered, not amended, copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.

Mr. Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his "Lone Vale" is divine.

Yours, &c., R. B.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

[In this letter Burns calls himself the voice of Coila, in imitation of Ossian, who denominates himself the voice of Cona. He was an ardent admirer of the Celtic bard, and carried his poems frequently about with him. "Sae merry as we twa hae been," and "Good night, and joy be wi' you a'," are the names of two northern tunes. The lyric written to the tune of "Shepherds, I have lost my love," is elsewhere given under the name of "The gowden locks of Anna." Thomson, it appears, did not approve of the song, even in its amended state: it has, however, obtained the approbation of a divine of the kirk of Scotland, and laymen need no longer hesitate in singing it. It is highly characteristic of our Bard.]

No. XX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, April, 1793.

I REJOICE to find, my dear Sir, that ballad-making continues to be your hobby-horse.—Great pity 'twould be were it otherwise. I hope you will amble it away for many a year, and "witch the world with your horsemanship."

I know there are a good many lively songs of merit that I have not put down in the list sent you; but I have them all in my eye.—"My Patie is a lover gay," though a little unequal, is a natural and very pleasing song, and I humbly think we ought not to displace or alter it, except the last stanza.

[Currie says, "the original letter from Mr. Thomson contains many observations on Scottish songs, and on the manner of adapting the words to the music, which, at his desire, are suppressed." To these observations Burns alludes in his answer, and intimates that he

* ["It will be found in the course of this correspondence that the Bard produced a second stanza of 'The Chevalier's Lament' (to which he here alludes) worthy of the first."—CURRIE.]

thinks his friend is a little too ready to sacrifice simplicity for the sake of something striking. No one can hope to compose a song to a tune unless he can either hum it, or whistle it, or sing it: the music commands the proper words, and a true poet will obey it, as Burns always did, save in one or two instances, where he evidently had not mastered the air. He tells us that he was in the habit of crooning the tune while in the act of composing it: nor will a song that echoes the music be obtained on easier terms.]

No. XXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April, 1793.

I HAVE yours, my dear Sir, this moment. I shall answer it, and your former letter, in my desultory way of saying whatever comes uppermost.

The business of many of our tunes, wanting at the beginning what fiddlers call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

> "There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
> That wander thro' the blooming heather,"

you may alter to

> "Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
> Ye wander," &c.

My song, "Here awa, there awa," as amended by Mr. Erskine, I entirely approve of, and return you.

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is, in my opinion, reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point, you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad; I mean simplicity: now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Ramsay, as every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces: still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr. W. proposes doing with "The last time I came o'er the moor." Let a poet, if he chooses, take up the idea of another, and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard, whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever, in the dark and narrow house,—by Heaven, 'twould be sacrilege! I grant that Mr. W.'s version is an improvement; but I know Mr. W. well, and esteem him much; let him mend the song as the Highlander mended his gun: he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not, by this, object to leaving out improper stanzas, where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in "The Lass o' Patie's Mill" must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for it. I am not sure if we can take the same liberty with "Corn Rigs are bonnie." Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen" you must leave with me yet a while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, "Poortith cauld and restless love." At any rate, my other song, "Green grow the Rashes," will never suit. That song is current in Scotland under the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name; which, of course, would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future: let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit "Bonnie Dundee." I send you also a ballad to the "Mill, Mill, O."*

"The last time I came o'er the moor" I would fain attempt to make a Scots song for, and let Ramsay's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS. Scots airs by me, which I have picked up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned lugs would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air, called "Jackie Hume's Lament?" I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I'll enclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's Museum.† I send you likewise, to me, a beautiful little air, which I had taken down from *viva voce*.‡—Adieu! R. B.

No. XXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

I HAD scarcely put my last letter into the post office, when I took up the subject of "The last time I came o'er the moor," and ere I slept

* ["The song to the tune of 'Bonnie Dundee' is that in No. XVI. The ballad to the 'Mill, Mill, O,' is that beginning,

'When wild war's deadly blasts are blawn.'"

CURRIE.]

† ["The song here mentioned is that given in No. XVIII., 'O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?' This song is surely Burns's own writing, though he does not generally praise his own songs so much."—NOTE BY MR. THOMSON.]

‡ [The air here mentioned is that for which he wrote the ballad of "Bonnie Jean."] See No. XXVII.

drew the outlines of the foregoing. How far I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other, occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have often told you, I do not in a single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert anything of mine. One hint let me give you—whatever Mr. Pleyel does, let him not alter one iota of the original Scottish airs; I mean in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect. R. B.

No. XXIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 26th April, 1793.

I HEARTILY thank you, my dear Sir, for your last two letters, and the songs which accompanied them. I am always both instructed and entertained by your observations; and the frankness with which you speak out your mind is to me highly agreeable. It is very possible I may not have the true idea of simplicity in composition. I confess there are several songs, of Allan Ramsay's for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural. But the lowest scenes of simple nature will not please generally, if copied precisely as they are. The poet, like the painter, must select what will form an agreeable as well as a natural picture. On this subject it were easy to enlarge; but at present suffice it to say that I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as a most essential quality in composition, and the ground-work of beauty in all the arts. I will gladly appropriate your most interesting new ballad, "When wild war's deadly blast," &c., to the "Mill, Mill, O," as well as the two other songs to their respective airs; but the third and fourth lines of the first verse must undergo some little alteration in order to suit the music. Pleyel does not alter a single note of the songs. That would be absurd indeed! With the airs which he introduces into the sonatas, I allow him to take such liberties as he pleases, but that has nothing to do with the songs.

P.S.—I wish you would do as you proposed with your "Rigs of Barley." If the loose sentiments are thrashed out of it, I will find an air for it; but as to this there is no hurry.

G. T.

["It is quite plain, from this letter, that Thomson was at issue with his correspondent on the subject-matter of simplicity. Burns, like old Burton, was a plain man, calling "a spade a spade;" simplicity of expression was dear to his heart, and he considered it as essential in song. Thomson says, "I confess there are several songs, of Allan Ramsay's for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural." He desired to vindicate the diplomatic language of the polished city; but Burns felt that elegance and simplicity were "sisters twin," and that words which failed to convey a clear meaning, or present a distinct image, were not for him."—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

June 1793.

WHEN I tell you, my dear Sir, that a friend of mine, in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unhinge me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss, as to pecuniary matters, is trifling: but the total ruin of a much-loved friend is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the "Mill, Mill, O."* What you think a defect, I esteem as a positive beauty: so you see how doctors differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Fraser, the hautboy-player in Edinburgh—he is here, instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this country. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one, well known as a reel, by the name of "The Quaker's Wife," and which I remember a grand-aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of "Liggeram Cosh, my bonnie wee lass." Mr. Fraser plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin, and enclose Fraser's set of the tune. If they hit your fancy they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's Museum. I think the song is not in my worst manner.

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* [The lines were the third and fourth:—

"Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning."

"As our poet had maintained a long silence, and the first part of Thomson's Musical work was in the press, this gentleman ventured, by Mr. Erskine's advice, to substitute for them in that publication,

'And eyes again with pleasure beam'd, &c.,'

which, though better suited to the music, are inferior to the original. This is the only alteration adopted by Thomson, which Burns did not approve, or at least assent to."—CURRIE.]

Blythe hae I been.

Tune—*Liggeram Cosh.*

I.

Blythe hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless ilka thought and free,
As the breeze flew o'er me.
Now nae langer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
Lesley is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

II.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring:
Trembling, I dow nocht but glow'r,
Sighing, dumb, despairing!
If she winna ease the thraws
In my bosom swelling;
Underneath the grass-green sod,
Soon maun be my dwelling.

I should wish to hear how this pleases you.

R. B.

[Though Miss Lesley Baillie, the heroine of this song, passed before the eyes of the Poet like a vision which never returns, her loveliness seems to have been long remembered. In expressing the hopelessness of misplaced love, Burns has surpassed all other poets: this song, and that of Jessy, would go far to sustain the assertion; but there are others of equal tenderness, which cannot but be present to the minds of all readers. Of the old song, from which he has borrowed nothing but the air, little is known: it was sometimes sung in Nithsdale, and had a touch of the nursery about it.]

No. XXV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

June 25th, 1793.

Have you ever, my dear Sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste, out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of "Logan Water," and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer; and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done any thing at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit:—

Logan Braes.

Tune—*Logan Water.*

I.

O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide
That day I was my Willie's bride!
And years sinsyne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flow'ry banks appear
Like drumlie winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes!

II.

Again the merry month o' May
Has made our hills and valleys gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers:
Blythe morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy:
My soul, delightless, a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

III.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile:
But I, wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights, and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

IV.

O wae upon you, men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?*
But soon may peace bring happy days
And Willie hame to Logan braes!

[Burns in one of his letters says, "I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of Logan water, which I think pretty:—

"Now my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

These lines belong to the "Logan braes" of the late John Mayne: the song was printed in the Star newspaper of May 23, 1789, and soon became a favourite, as it well might:—

"By Logan streams that rin sae deep,
Fu' aft wi' glee I've herded sheep:
I've herded sheep, or gather'd slaes
Wi' my dear lad on Logan braes.
But wae's my heart thae days are gans,
And fu' o' grief I herd my lane;
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

* Originally—
"Ye mind na, 'mid your cruel joys,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cries."

Nae mair at Logan kirk will he
Atween the preachings meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or when it's mirk,
Convoy me hame frae Logan kirk.
I weel may sing thae days are gane,
Frae kirk and fair, I come my lane;
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

The old verses to the same air, on which the modern songs are founded, will be given in the Poet's notes on Scottish Song—they are curious.]

Do you know the following beautiful little fragment, in Witherspoon's collection of Scots songs?

Air—*Hughie Graham.*

"O GIN my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel' a drap o' dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa'!

"Oh, there beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa by Phœbus' light."

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful; and quite, so far as I know, original. It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether, unless you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes, on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but, if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place; as every poet, who knows any thing of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.

O were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing!

How I wad mourn, when it was torn
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

R. B.

[There are fragments of song of a nature so exquisitely fine that, like the purest marble, they cannot be eked out or repaired without showing where the hand of the restorer has been. Burns, though eminently skilful, has not succeeded in writing a verse worthy of the one preserved by Witherspoon: his lines are beautiful: but lilacs are not favorites with birds: the odour of their blossoms is unpleasing to the musicians of the air, and they seldom build in them, or seek them out as a shelter. Tradition has many additional verses, of which the following are pretty:—

"O were my love yon pickle leeks,
That's growing in the garden green;
And were I but the gard'ner lad—
I wad lie near the leeks at e'en:

O were my love yon fragrant gean,
That hangs sae drap ripe on the tree;
And I were but yon little bird—
Far wi' that fragrant gean I'd flee.

O gin my love were a turtle dove,
Flying about frae tree to tree;
And I myself a single blackbird,
I'd fly and bear her company."]

No. XXVI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Monday, 1st July, 1793.

I AM extremely sorry, my good Sir, that any thing should happen to unhinge you. The times are terribly out of tune, and when harmony will be restored, Heaven knows.

The first book of songs, just published, will be dispatched to you along with this. Let me be favoured with your opinion of it, frankly and freely.

I shall certainly give a place to the song you have written for the "Quaker's Wife;" it is quite enchanting. Pray will you return the list of songs, with such airs added to it as you think ought to be included. The business now rests entirely on myself, the gentlemen who originally agreed to join the speculation having requested to be off. No matter, a loser I cannot be. The superior excellence of the work will create a general demand for it, as soon as it is properly known. And, were the sale even slower than it promises to be, I should be somewhat compensated for my labour by the pleasure I shall receive from the music. I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to inclose a small mark of my gratitude,* and to repeat it afterwards, when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by Heaven! if you do, our correspondence is at an end: and, though this would be no loss to you, it would mar the publication, which, under your auspices, cannot fail to be respectable and interesting.

Wednesday Morning.

I thank you for your delicate additional verses to the old fragment, and for your excellent song to "Logan Water:" Thomson's truly elegant one will follow for the English singer. Your apostrophe to statesmen is admirable, but I am not sure if it is quite suitable to the supposed gentle character of the fair mourner who speaks it.

G. T.

* A bank-note for five pounds.

[One of the gentlemen whom Thomson alludes to as partners in his speculation was the Hon. Andrew Erskine: his health was declining, and, desiring to free his mind from all the solicitude of either verse or music, he requested, as his partner says, to "be off." He did not long survive the separation.]

No. XXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

July 2nd, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

I HAVE just finished the following ballad, and, as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns' wood-note wild, is very fond of it; and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

There was a Lass, and she was fair.

Tune—*Bonnie Jean.*

I.

THERE was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen,
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonnie Jean.

II.

And aye she wrought her mammie's wark,
And aye she sang sae merrilie:
The blithest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

III.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest:
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

IV.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

V.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

VI.

As in the bosom o' the stream,
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean.*

VII.

And now she works her mammie's wark,
And aye she sighs wi' care and pain;
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad mak her weel again.

VIII.

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e'e,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love
Ae e'enin' on the lily lea?

IX.

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to hers he fondly prest,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:

X.

"O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
O canst thou think to fancy me?
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi' me?

XI.

"At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me."

XII.

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was aye between them twa.

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out.

The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M., daughter to Mr. M., of D., one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager. R. B.

[Some of the finest of the songs of Burns were composed in honour of the charms of ladies of my native vale. Jean, the eldest daughter of John M'Murdo, Esq. of Drumlanrig, was the heroine of this exquisite song. The original, presented by the Poet to the family, lies before me: there are many variations, but they are of language rather than of sentiment. It wants the verse which Burns reckoned original:

"As in the bosom of the stream
The moonbeam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling pure was tender love
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean."

The first two lines of the eleventh verse stand thus in the manuscript, and perhaps it would be as well to restore them:—

* [In the original MS. our Poet asks Mr. Thomson if this stanza is not original?—CURRIE.]

"Thy handsome foot thou shalt na set
In barn or byre to trouble thee."

The homage paid to the graceful forms of the ladies of the M'Murdo family merits notice, were it but to justify the Poet from a charge, brought against him in Ayr-shire, that his beauties were not other men's beauties. The o'erword of an old song seems to have been in his fancy when composing this lyric:—

"Learn to turn the maut wi' me."

—it occurs oftener than once in the manuscript. —CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XXVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

July, 1793.

I ASSURE you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but, as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear, by that HONOUR which crowns the upright statue of ROBERT BURNS'S INTEGRITY—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! BURNS'S character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants, which the cold unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold, in any musical work, such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written: only your partiality to me has made you say too much: however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you, so I may be often tautological, or perhaps contradictory.

"The Flowers o' the Forest" is charming as a poem; and should be, and must be, set to the notes, but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas, beginning

"I hae seen the smiling o' fortune beguiling,"

are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalize the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs. Cockburn; I forget of what place; but from Roxburgh-shire. What a charming apostrophe is

"O fickle fortune, why this cruel sporting,
Why, why torment us—poor sons of a day!"

The old ballad, "I wish I were where Helen lies," is silly, to contemptibility. My alteration of it, in Johnson's, is not much better. Mr. Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, ancient ballads (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough, forgeries), has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations,—but no matter.

In my next I will suggest to your consideration a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the mean time allow me to congratulate you now, as a brother of the quill. You have committed your character and fame; which will now be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF TASTE—all whom poesy can please, or music charm.

Being a bard of nature, I have some pretensions to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretel and affirm that your great-grand-child will hold up your volumes, and say, with honest pride, "This so much admired selection was the work of my ancestor!"

[Much has been said, and not a little written, concerning the refusal of Burns to receive a recompense in money for his labours; he had a right to do as he pleased, but certainly the labourer was worthy of his hire. Had he lived, he might have taken a lesson from Thomson in such matters.—"The publisher," says that gentleman in his preface, "has an exclusive right to all the songs written purposely for his collections, as well as to all the symphonies and accompaniments. And as he did not obtain these without expending a large sum of money, without laborious researches and unwearied exertions, and not until after a correspondence of twenty years with poets, musicians, antiquaries, both at home and abroad, he feels it due to himself distinctly to announce that if any person shall publish any of these songs, or any of the symphonies or accompaniments, he may depend upon being prosecuted for damages, in terms of the Act of Parliament." Nay, even from Burns himself he obtained a document which might have opened the Poet's eyes to the value of his own productions.—"I do hereby certify that all the songs of my writing, published and to be published by Mr. George Thomson of Edinburgh, are so published by my authority. And, moreover, that I never empowered any other person to publish any of the songs written by me for his work. And I authorize him to prosecute any person or persons who shall publish or vend any of those songs without his consent. (Signed) Robert Burns."

The old ballad of "I wish I were where Helen lies," for which the Poet expresses such contempt, is considered by many both beautiful and affecting. Currie seems to suppose that Burns was unacquainted with the genuine old strain, but the song which he altered for the Museum contains proof to the contrary: it is

the ancient strain itself; anything but improved by the alterations. Tradition readily supplies many versions—all are beautiful:—

FAIR HELEN OF KIRKCONNELL.

"I wish I were where Helen lies—
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnell lea.

O Helen fair, beyond compare,
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I die.

Curs'd be the heart that thought the thought,
And curs'd the hand that fir'd the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died for sake o' me.

O think na but my heart was sair
When my love fell and spak nae mair;
I laid her down wi' meikle care
On fair Kirkconnell lea.

I laid her down, my sword did draw,
Stern was our strife in Kirtle-shaw—
I hew'd him down in pieces sma'
For her that died for me.

O that I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries,
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
'O come, my love, to me!'

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
Were I with thee I would be blest,
Where thou ly'st low, and tak'st thy rest
On fair Kirkconnell lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries;
I'm sick of all beneath the skies,
Since my love died for me."

Fair Helen of Kirkconnell belongs to the romantic songs of Scotland; other poets have taken up the story of the lovers, but the strains of the elder bard still triumph.]

No. XXIX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 1st August, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your last two letters, and am happy to find you are quite pleased with the appearance of the first book. When you come to hear the songs sung and accompanied, you will be charmed with them.

"The bonnie brucket Lassie" certainly deserves better verses, and I hope you will match her. "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen," "Let me in this ae night," and several of the livelier airs, wait the muse's leisure: these are peculiarly worthy of her choice gifts: besides, you'll notice that, in airs of this sort, the singer can always do greater justice to the poet than in the slower airs of "The bush aboon Traquair," "Lord Gregory," and the like; for, in the manner the latter are frequently sung, you must be contented with the sound without the sense. Indeed, both the airs and words are disguised by the very slow, languid, psalm-singing style in which they are too often performed: they lose animation and expression altogether, and instead of speaking to the mind, or touching the heart, they cloy upon the ear, and set us a yawning!

Your ballad, "There was a Lass, and she was fair," is simple and beautiful, and shall undoubtedly grace my collection. G. T.

XXX

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

MY DEAR THOMSON:

I HOLD the pen for our friend Clarke, who, at present, is studying the music of the spheres at my elbow. The "Georgium Sidus," he thinks, is rather out of tune; so, until he rectify that matter, he cannot stoop to terrestrial affairs.

He sends you six of the Rondeau subjects, and, if more are wanted, he says you shall have them.

Confound your long stairs!

S. CLARKE.

[The writer of this odd note was Stephen Clarke, teacher and composer of music; who superintended the publication of the Musical Museum, and through Burns was introduced to several good families in Dumfries-shire.]

No. XXXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

YOUR objection, my dear Sir, to the passages in my song of "Logan Water," is right in one instance; but it is difficult to mend it; if I can I will. The other passage you object to does not appear in the same light to me.

I have tried my hand on "Robin Adair," and, you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing any thing better to it.

Phillis the Fair.

Tune—*Robin Adair.*

I.

While larks with little wing
Fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare:
Gay the sun's golden eye
Peep'd o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry,
Phillis the fair.

II.

In each bird's careless song,
Glad did I share;
While yon wild flowers among,
Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say,
Phillis the fair.

III.

Down in a shady walk
Doves cooing were;
I mark'd the cruel hawk
Caught in a snare:
So kind may fortune be,
Such make his destiny!
He who would injure thee,
Phillis the fair.

So much for Namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen." If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine: if not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly on the business. 'Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor, which you owe yourself. R. B.

[Phillis M'Murdo is the heroine of this song: Burns wrote it at the request of Stephen Clarke the musician, who believed himself in love with his "charming pupil."]

No. XXXII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

August, 1793.

My good Sir,

I consider it one of the most agreeable circumstances attending this publication of mine that it has procured me so many of your much valued epistles. Pray make my acknowledgments to St. Stephen for the tunes: tell him I admit the justness of his complaint on my staircase conveyed in his laconic postscript to your *jeu d'esprit;* which I perused more than once, without discovering exactly whether your discussion was music, astronomy, or politics: though a sagacious friend, acquainted with the convivial habits of the poet and the musician, offered me a bet, of two to one, you were just drowning care together; that an empty bowl was the only thing that would deeply affect you, and the only matter you could then study how to remedy!

I shall be glad to see you give "Robin Adair" a Scottish dress. Peter is furnishing him with an English suit for a change, and you are well matched together. Robin's air is excellent, though he certainly has an out-of-the-way measure as ever poor Parnassian wight was plagued with.—I wish you would invoke the muse for a single elegant stanza to be substituted for the concluding objectionable verses of "Down the Burn, Davie," so that this most exquisite song may no longer be excluded from good company.

Mr. Allan has made an inimitable drawing from your "John Anderson, my Jo," which I am to have engraved as a frontispiece to the humourous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it, I promise you. The old couple are seated by the fire-side. Mrs. Anderson, in great good-humour, is clapping John's shoulders, while he smiles and looks at her with such glee as to shew that he fully recollects the pleasant days and nights when they were "first acquent." The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers. G. T.

["The 'Mrs. Anderson' on whom this praise is bestowed is what the old ballad calls

'A carlin—a rig-widdie carlin,'

and seems fitter for a wife to him of Linkum-doddie than to be spouse to cantie and douce John. She has the look of an ogress: her nose resembles a ram-horn, and the fingers which she is about to apply to her husband's lyart-locks are as hard as lobster-claws."—Cunningham.]

No. XXXIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

That crinkum-crankum tune "Robin Adair" has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured,

in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice, as follows:—

Had I a Cave.

Tune—*Robin Adair.*

I.

Had I a cave on some wild, distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar;
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

II.

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare
All thy fond plighted vows—fleeting as air!
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander, in Breadalbane's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother's singing Gaelic songs to both "Robin Adair" and "Gramachree." They certainly have more of the Scotch than the Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness; so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them;—except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers, and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favourite airs might be common to both. A case in point—They have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called "Caun du delish." The fact is, in a publication of Corri's a great while ago, you will find the same air, called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is "Oran Gaoil," and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the Rev. Gaelic parson,* about these matters.

R. B.

No. XXXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

My dear Sir:

"Let me in this ae night" I will re-consider. I am glad that you are pleased with my song, "Had I a cave," &c., as I liked it myself.

I walked out yesterday evening, with a volume of the Museum in my hand; when, turning up "Allan Water," "What numbers shall the muse repeat," &c., as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air, and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, 'till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's "Tea Table," where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is "Allan Water;" or, "My love Annie's very bonnie." This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which, I presume, it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a choosing line, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy:—

By Allan Stream.

Tune—"*Allan Water.*"

I.

By Allan stream I chanc'd to rove
While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi; †
The winds were whispering through the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
And thought on youthfu' pleasures many;
And aye the wild wood echoes rang—
O dearly do I love thee, Annie! ‡

II.

O, happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly bogle make it eerie;
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my dearie!
Her head upon my throbbing breast,
She, sinking, said "I'm thine for ever!"
While mony a kiss the seal imprest,
The sacred vow,—we ne'er should sever.

III.

The haunt o' spring's the primrose brae,
The simmer joys the flocks to follow;
How cheery, thro' her shortening day,
Is autumn, in her weeds o' yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

Bravo! say I: it is a good song. Should you think so too, (not else,) you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than all the year else.

God bless you! R. B.

* The Gaelic parson referred to was, we are informed, the Rev. Joseph Robertson Macgregor.

† A mountain west of Strath-Allan, 3,009 feet high.—R.B.

‡ Or, "O my love Annie's very bonnie."—R.B.

[The fancy of Burns took a flight northwards in conceiving this song. Allan Water gives its name to the strath. The Poet might have found all that he wanted in his immediate neighbourhood: Criffel or Queensberry rise loftily enough, and Annan Water is sufficiently pure for all the purposes of song: moreover, the old lyric from which he took the idea belongs to the district:—

"O Annan Water's wide and deep,
And my love Annie's wondrous bonnie
Shall I be laith to weet my feet
For her whom I love best of onie?
Gar saddle me my bonnie black,
Gar saddle soon and make him ready,
For I will down the Gatehope-slack
And a' to see my bonnie lady."

Another ancient strain has a similarity of thought and language—the lover seems to be a cautious person:

"O Annan Water's wading deep,
Yet I am loth to weet my feet;
But if ye'll consent to marry me,
I'll hire a horse to carry thee."

The Annan is a beautiful river with alternate pool and stream, and liable, like all mountain waters, to sudden floods. Burns was often on its banks; amongst its woods he sought for smugglers, or wooed the muses, as circumstances required.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XXXV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

Is "Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad," one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. Urbani, whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but, as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's Museum.

O whistle, and I'll come to you.

I.

O WHISTLE, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.
But warily tent, when you come to court me,
And come na unless the back-yett be a-jee;
Syne up the back-stile, and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin' to me,
And come as ye were na comin' to me.

II.

At Kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd na a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me,
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.

III.

Aye vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whyles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But court na anither, tho' jokin' ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.*

Another favourite air of mine is, "The muckin o' Geordie's byre." When sung slow, with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry: that, I have endeavoured to supply, as follows:—

Adown winding Nith.

I.

ADOWN winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare:
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis!
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

II.

The daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillis,
For she is simplicity's child.

III.

The rose-bud's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest:
How fair and how pure is the lily,
But fairer and purer her breast!

IV.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie:
Her breath is the breath o' the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond, her eye.

---

* [This song is founded on some old lines to the same air, which the Poet has wrought into the first verse. There are several variations in Burns's own hand.

"O whistle, and I'll come to thee, my jo,
O whistle, and I'll come to thee, my jo,
Tho' father and mother and a' should say no,
O whistle, and I'll come to thee, my jo."

From one of the variations it appears that the name of the heroine was Jeanie:—

"Though father and mother and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeanie will venture wi' thee, my lad."

[See Letter LXXIX.]

Who the lady was no one has told us: Jeanies abounded in the district: some of them were eminently beautiful; yet none, save one, was likely to countenance a lover who made his appearance under the cloud of night and courted concealment.]

V.

Her voice is the song of the morning,
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.

VI.

But beauty how frail and how fleeting,
The bloom of a fine summer's day!
While worth in the mind o' my Phillis
Will flourish without a decay.

Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare:
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.*

Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss P. M., sister to "Bonnie Jean." They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me, the very first grist I get from my rhyming-mill. R. B.

No. XXXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

THAT tune, "Cauld Kail," is such a favourite of yours that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloamin-shot at the muses;† when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding without step," and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits: secondly, the last stanza of this song I send you is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's Museum.

Come, let me take Thee.

Air—*Cauld Kail.*

I.

COME, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The warld's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone
That I may live to love her.

II.

Thus in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy een, sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never!

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favourite air, I shall be highly pleased. "The last time I came o'er the moor" I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing. R.B.

[The legends of the Vale of Nith say that the heroine of "Come let me take thee to my breast," was Jean Lorimer. Burns was so much under the influence of beauty that he is never supposed to sing without some living fair one in his mind; and, as the "Lass of Craigieburn" was far from coy, popular belief has seated her beside the Poet, and inspired him with her blue eyes and rosy lips. Be this as it may, it is quite evident that nothing is borrowed from the old words of the air to which the song is adapted.]

No. XXXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

Dainty Davie.

I.

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;

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* [This song is not indebted to old verses for either its sentiments or its character. The young lady who inspired it was Miss Phillis M'Murdo, afterwards Mrs. Norman Lockhart, of Carnwath. "This song," says Currie, "though certainly beautiful, would appear to more advantage without the chorus, as is indeed the case with several other songs of our author.' The chorus seems no incumbrance in this instance; it maintains the leading sentiment, and, in singing, enables the other voices to take a share, and give additional emphasis to the praise bestowed on this Nithsdale beauty. The former editors of Burns seem to have disliked choruses greatly; they are sometimes omitted, though the song cannot be sung without them. It is true that the chorus seldom carries on the story; but then that is not its object; it enables the company to take a share in the entertainment, and no one need be told with what effect two or three well-tuned voices take up the o'er-word at the end of each verse.—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

† [*Gloaming* —twilight. A beautiful *poetic* word which ought to be adopted in England. A *gloaming-shot*, a twilight interview.—CURRIE.

The word gloaming *is* now adopted by the best writers in the English language, as a peculiarly sweet and poetical synonyme.]

And now comes in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

II.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi' my Davie.

III.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro' the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.

IV.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that's my ain dear Davie.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune.—See Clarke's set of it in the Museum.

N.B. In the Museum they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is cursed nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way. R. B.

[" The reader will find an earlier song to this air, under the title of " When Rosy May comes in wi' Flowers." The Poet has added a very happy chorus, and made some alterations; they are curious—as showing the care with which he sometimes revised compositions from which he hoped for fame.—' Dainty Davie' is the name of an old merry song, from which Burns has borrowed nothing save the title and the measure. It relates the adventure of David Williamson, a preacher of the days of the Covenant: he was pursued by Dalzell's dragoons, and seeking refuge in the house of Cherrytrees, the devout lady put the man of God into a bed beside her daughter to hide him from the men of Belial: the return which the reverend gentleman made for this is set forth very graphically in the old verses. The young lady sings—

" Being pursued by a dragoon,
Within my bed he was laid down,
And weel I wat he was worth his room—
My douce, my dainty Davie."

The lady of Cherrytrees is not the only example of strong faith in the fair sex. Sir Robert Strange, the eminent engraver, fled in his youth from a field of battle, where he had fought in vain for his native princes, and, being hotly pursued, sought refuge in a gentleman's house, where a lady—beautiful and young—concealed him under her hooped petticoat. When the days of peace came and fortune smiled, the grateful rebel wooed his protectress and made her his wife: she was equally witty and lovely, and figured among the fashionables of London till the death of her husband.

" The Nithsdale lady went to no such extremities in her affection—her name has not transpired—the name of one who had courage to keep a tryste on the ' Warlock knowe' is worthy of remembrance."—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XXXVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 1st September, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

SINCE writing you last, I have received half a dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humour and fancy of " Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad," will render it nearly as great a favourite as " Duncan Gray." " Come, let me take thee to my breast,"—" Adown winding Nith," and " By Allan stream," &c., are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the airs for which they are intended.—" Had I a cave on some wild distant shore" is a striking and affecting composition. Our friend, to whose story it refers, read it with a swelling heart, I assure you.—The union we are now forming, I think, can never be broken: these songs of yours will descend with the music to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as genius, taste, and sensibility exist in our island.

While the muse seems so propitious, I think it right to inclose a list of all the favours I have to ask of her—no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm that they must be familiar to him who writes for them. G. T.

[" Thomson at first spoke of twenty or five and twenty songs: at the time when he wrote this letter he had received seven and twenty, yet he requests three and twenty more because the muse was propitious, and the Poet enthusiastic! It will be seen that the list was not limited to this number. When Burns refused money, it was for the songs which he had undertaken to supply: there is no word of any recompense for the new batch of lyrics."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XXXIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

You may readily trust, my dear Sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you; the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then: though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air, "Hey, tuttie taitie," may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannock-burn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air that one might suppose to be the gallant Royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning:—

Bruce's Address to his Army at Bannockburn.

Tune—*Hey, tuttie taitie.*

I.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to Victorie!

II.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's pow'r—
Chains and slaverie!

III.

Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

IV.

Wha for Scotland's king and law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw;
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa'?
Let him follow me!

V.

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

VI.

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us do, or die!

So may God ever defend the cause of truth and liberty, as he did that day!—Amen.

P.S. I showed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it, but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection. R. B.

[It is related, by Syme of Ryedale, that Burns composed this noble song under the influence of a storm of rain and lightning among the wilds of Glenken, in Galloway. When "the rain and the whirlwind came abroad," the Poet regarded them not: he neither drew his hat over his brow, nor urged his pony onward, but seemed lost in thought. The fruit of this silence was the "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled;" an extraordinary song produced in an extraordinary manner.

Something of the spirit of this far-famed song is visible in memoranda, made by Burns on visiting the field of battle in August, 1787.—"Come on to Bannockburn. Shewn the old house where James III. finished so tragically his unfortunate life. The field of Bannockburn: the hole in the stone where glorious Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen, coming o'er the hill and down upon the plunderers of their country—the murderers of their fathers: noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe! I see them meet in gloriously-triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence!"].

No. XL.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I DARE say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse, which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that, when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgarlick, the bedlam jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of man.

The following song I have composed for "Oran-gaoil," the Highland air that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well!—If not, 'tis also well! R. B.

Behold the Hour.

Tune—*Oran-gaoil*

I.

BEHOLD the hour, the boat arrive,
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart!
Sever'd from thee can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell,
Yon distant isle will often hail:
"E'en here I took the last farewell;
There, latest mark'd her vanish'd sail."

II.

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye:
Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While thro' thy sweets she loves to stray,
O, tell me, does she muse on me?

[The inspirer of this song is said to have been Clarinda: she meditated, it seems, a voyage to a certain Western isle, and the Poet has imagined the last farewell taken, and the parting looks interchanged. Some of his most impassioned lyrics were composed in honour of this accomplished lady.]

No. XLI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 5th Sept. 1793.

I BELIEVE it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakspeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your heroic ode is, to me, the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it, entreated me to find out a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as *Hey, tuttie taitie.* Assuredly your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it; for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs—I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred airs of which I lately sent you the list, and I think *Lewie Gordon* is most happily adapted to your ode; at least with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in *Lewie Gordon* more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of "Lewie Gordon," which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry that characterize your verses. Now the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse—the only line too short for the air—is as follows:—

Verse 1st, Or to *glorious* victorie.
2nd, *Chains*—chains and slaverie.
3rd, Let him, *let him* turn and flee.
4th, Let him *bravely* follow me.
5th, But *they shall,* they shall be free.
6th, Let us, *let us* do or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy. The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is, "Welcome to your gory bed." Would not another word be preferable to "welcome?" In your next I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with the greatest deference.*

* [In the third volume of Thomson's Collection we find the following remarks;—"The Poet originally intended this noble strain for the air of *Hey Tutti Taitie;* but on a suggestion from the editor, who then thought *Lewie Gordon* a better tune for the words, they were united together, and published in the preceding volume. The editor, however, having since examined the air *Hey Tutti Taiti* with more particular attention, frankly owns that he has changed his opinion; and that

The beauty of the verses you have made for "Oran-gaoil" will ensure celebrity to the air.

G. T.

[The simple energy of this noble war-ode is weakened greatly by lengthening the fourth line of each verse to suit the air of *Lewie Gordon*. These changes are now generally rejected both by reader and singer. A more finished version of the Ode appears in p. 476.]

No. XLII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

I HAVE received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.*

"Down the burn, Davie." I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus:—

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was aye the tale.
With "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
And aye shall follow you."†

"Through the wood, laddie"—I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame," the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

"Cowden-knowes." Remember, in your index, that the song in pure English to this tune, beginning—

"When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,"

is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

"Laddie, lie near me," must lie by me for some time. I do not know the air; and, until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza—when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fire-side of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism!

"Gil Morris" I am for leaving out. It is a plaguy length; the air itself is never sung, and its place can be well supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list. For instance, "Craigie-burn wood," and "Roy's Wife." The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the hand-writing of the lady who composed it: and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen. ‡

"Highland laddie." The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best; and the new an Italianized one. There is a third, and, what Oswald calls, the old "Highland laddie," which pleases me more than either of them. It is sometimes called "Jinglan Johnnie;" it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the Museum, "I hae been at Crookieden," &c. I would advise you, in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction; and, in the mean time, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is no doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

"Auld Sir Simon," I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place, "The Quaker's Wife."

"Blythe hae I been o'er the hill," is one of the finest songs I ever made in my life; and, besides, is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include "The bonniest lass in a' the warld" in your collection.

"Dainty Davie," I have heard sung, nineteen thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing has surprised me

he thinks it much better adapted for giving energy to the poetry than the air of Lewie Gordon. He therefore sent it to Haydn, who has entered into the spirit of it with a felicity peculiar to himself; his inimitable symphonies and accompaniments render it completely martial and highly characteristic of the heroic verses. It is worthy of remark that this appears to be the oldest Scottish air concerning which anything like evidence is to be found.]

* Mr. Thomson's list of songs for his publication. In his remarks, the Bard proceeds in order, and goes through the whole; but on many of them he merely signifies his approbation. All his remarks of any importance are presented to the reader.—CURRIE.

† This alteration Thomson has adopted, instead of the last stanza of the original song, which is objectionable in point of delicacy.—CURRIE.

‡ This song, so much admired by our bard, appears in No. LXVI.

so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit, as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

"Fee him, father."—I inclose you Fraser's set of this tune when he plays it slow; in fact, he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which "Patie Allan's Mither died, that was, about the back o' midnight;" and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company, except the hautbois and the muse.

Thou hast left me ever.

Tune—*Fee him, Father.*

I.

THOU hast left me ever, Jamie!
Thou hast left me ever;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie!
Thou hast left me ever.
Aften hast thou vow'd that death
Only should us sever;
Now thou'st left thy lass for aye—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never!

II.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie!
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie!
Thou hast me forsaken.
Thou canst love anither jo,
While my heart is breaking:
Soon my weary een I'll close—
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Ne'er mair to waken!

[The Poet left these exquisite verses unfinished: it was his intention to have added another stanza, but he either forgot or failed to find the muse in a suitable mood. Though a fragment, the song, when sung with proper feeling, never fails to make a deep impression. "The Scotch," says Currie, "employ the abbreviation 'I'll' or 'I shall,' as well as 'I will,' and it is for 'I shall' it is used in this song. In Annandale, as in the northern counties of England, for 'I shall' they use 'I'se.'"]

"Jockey and Jenny" I would discard, and in its place would put "There's nae luck about the house," which has a very pleasant air; and which is positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other, language. "When she came ben she bobbet," as an air, is more beautiful than either, and in the *andante* way would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

"Saw ye my Father?" is one of my greatest favorites. The evening before last I wandered out and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings—"Saw ye my Father?" &c.

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.*

"Todlin hame." Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine—that this air is highly susceptible of pathos: accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert try it to a song of mine in the Museum—"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon." One song more and I have done—"Auld lang syne." The air is but mediocre; but the following song, the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air:—

Auld lang syne.

I.

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

II.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wandered mony a weary foot,
Sin auld lang syne.

III.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine:
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.

IV.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne!

* The song here alluded to appears entire in an English dress in No. XLV. beginning,
'Where are the joys I hae met in the morning."

The Scottish version of the first four verses which the Poet submits to Thomson in this letter differs in a very slight degree.

V.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

Now, I suppose, I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. "Gil Morice," "Tranent Muir," "Macpherson's farewell," "Battle of Sherriff Muir," or, "We ran and they ran" (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history), "Hardiknute," "Barbara Allan" (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared); and besides do you know that I really have the old tune to which "The Cherry and the Slae" was sung; and which is mentioned as a well known air in "Scotland's Complaint," a book published before poor Mary's days. It was then called "The banks o' Helicon;" an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's history of Scottish music. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind. R. B.

["Auld Lang Syne" is one of those lyrics which owes its conception to the olden muse, and all the beauty of its language and sentiment to the modern. Burns introduced it to Thomson as an effort of an old minstrel, and he wrote thus to Mrs. Dunlop:—"Light be the turf on the breast of the heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment!" In this sentiment millions will concur. As he professed to have taken it down from the lips of an old man—one of those old men whom true poets alone can meet with—we need not seek for the original in our collections. The "Auld Lang Syne" of Ramsay's Miscellany helps us to a line or so:—

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
Though they return wi' scars;
These are the noble hero's lot,
Obtained in glorious wars."

We subjoin the earliest copy of this song, printed before 1700, from which it will be seen that, notwithstanding the Poet's resolute disclaimer, the merits of his version are peculiarly his own:—

AULD LANGSYNE.

To its own proper tune.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone;
Is thy kind heart, now grown so cold,
In that loving breast of thine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On auld langsyne?

Where are thy protestations—
Thy vows and oaths, my dear,
Thou made to me, and I to thee,
In register yet clear;
Is faith and truth so violate
To the immortal gods divine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On auld langsyne?

Is't *Cupid's* fears, or frostie cares,
That makes thy sp'rits decay?
Or is't some object of more worth
That's stol'n thy heart away?
Or some desert makes thee neglect
Her once so much was thine,
That thou can'st never once reflect
On auld langsyne?

Is't worldly cares so desperate,
That makes thee to despair?
Is't that makes thee exasperate,
And makes thee to forbear?
If thou of that were free as I,
Thou surely should be mine,
And then, of new, we would renew
Kind auld langsyne.

But since that nothing can prevail,
And all hope now is vain,
From these rejected eyes of mine
Still showers of tears shall rain;
And though thou hast me now forgot,
Yet I'll continue thine,
Yea, though thou hast me now forgot,
And auld langsyne.

If e'er I have a house, my dear,
That's truly called mine,
And can afford but country cheer,
Or aught that's good therein;
Tho' thou were rebel to the king,
And beat with wind and rain,
Thou'rt sure thyself of welcome, love,
For auld langsyne.]

No. XLIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

I am happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea, "honour's bed," is, though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows:—

Ode.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS AT BANNOCKBURN.*

Tune—*Lewis Gordon.*

I.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace† bled;
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to glorious victorie!

II.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Edward! chains and slaverie!

III.

Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Traitor! coward! turn and flee!

* ["The field on which this memorable battle was fought is annually visited by English tourists, and they seldom leave it without carrying away something to remind them of the spot. Some even invaded the sanctity of the 'Bore stone,' in which the standard of Bruce was placed, and carried bits with them as specimens. Those who reflect rightly on the upshot of the contest feel that in the triumph of free-born men the great cause of liberty triumphed: no historian, save one with a contracted heart—nor enlightened statesman, can regard the struggles of Scotland with other feelings than those of sympathy. Few Scotsmen can pass the porphyry tomb of Edward the First in Westminster Abbey, without a certain mounting of the blood; or look upon the 'old black stone of Scone,' without recollecting how it came there. These are not narrow-souled nationalities.

"The memorable Scotch stone is any thing but black; it is a rough-piled reddish-grey sandstone, such as may be found on the Solway-side at Arbigland; it is six-and-twenty inches long, sixteen inches wide, and eleven inches thick, and is fixed in the bottom of the chair with cramps of iron. The stone is unquestionably Scottish: troughs, crosses, and other ancient matters, at present to be found in the north, seem from the same quarry."—Cunningham.]

† [The renowned Sir William Wallace, of Elderslie, whose ardent love of his native country, and the freedom of her sons, distinguished him above all other men of his own day, and who, by his talents and his valour, and his many patriotic virtues, won the confidence of the whole Scottish nation, was a younger branch of the very ancient family of Wallace of Craigie and Elderslie, in the county of Ayr, which family is noted in history long before the time of the great Sir William, and had been honoured with rank and wealth, and had extensive possessions. Among the distinguished members of this ancient family, perhaps the most remarkable was Sir John Wallace of Craigie, who defeated the English at the battle of Sark. The Wallaces of Craigie, among other proofs of royal favour, had a coat of arms very nearly the same as the royal arms of Scotland, including the royal tressure, a mark of distinction granted in ancient times for signal services in the field of battle. The arms of this family (a lion within a double tressure, with two lions as supporters, and two eagles' heads crossed), were borne by them. Mottoes were not much in use in these early days; and therefore we find the arms of Wallace of Craigie without any motto attached, as the impression of a seal of that family now before us proves, which seal is attached to a deed written on parchment, dated in 1464, with a sight of which we have been favoured by its possessor, Mr. Wallace of Kelly; both are in perfect preservation, and we have been permitted to attach an engraving of the seal to the fac-simile of Burns' celebrated Ode, in order to exhibit the arms of Sir William Wallace's family.

Sir William Wallace of Elderslie, the patriot so especially referred to in the universally popular Ode of Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled; but better known in the history of his country under the well-merited title of "The Guardian of Scotland," left no male issue; and consequently the branch of the family he sprung from, which was a younger branch, was merged in that of the parent stock. Besides the arms here described, the Wallace family have long used as a crest the broad-sword proper, with "*Pro Libertate*," as motto. This device was conferred on the "Guardian of Scotland" by the monarch who wore that crown he so gallantly defended, as emblematic of his high deserts, indomitable courage, and extraordinary success in defence of his king and country.

Mr. Wallace, of Kelly, the male representative of the family, is entitled to bear the principal arms of the ancient family of Craigie, surmounted by the proper crest and motto.

The immortal Sir William Wallace, one of the favourite heroes of our Bard, is still honourably represented by Mr. Wallace, through a long line of ancestors. In the family tree his descent is clearly traced as the heir male of Wallace of Craigie, and of the younger branch from which sprung the Guardian of Scotland, who, it is well known, was treacherously betrayed by Sir John Monteith into the hands of Edw. I. of England, and afterwards most foully murdered in the Tower of London, in 1305.—Had Burns been spared to witness the course of public life that he who represents the Guardian of Scotland has chalked out and followed during three successive Parliaments—that is, ever since the passing of the Reform Bill, which for the first time opened the doors of the House of Commons to men of Mr. Wallace's liberal views on all questions, political and commercial—a course so truly congenial to the liberty-loving soul of the Poet, it would doubtless have induced him to address the honourable member for Greenock in terms of well-merited eulogium; and thereby have lent his aid in transmitting to posterity the worth and usefulness of that public-spirited and indefatigable legislator.

The Wallace family have often had the honour of knighthood conferred on its chiefs, besides being able to boast of at least two baronetcies. Why these have not been continued to the heirs male we are at a loss to conjecture; for surely honours bestowed for services rendered the state in times so long gone by should be perpetuated; and we cannot but think that, in doing this, Mr. Wallace would be but receiving an act of justice to the memory of his patriotic progenitors, and to his own position in the country. Who else is there in all the length and breadth of the land, who would not be proud to boast of the lineage entitling him to bear the arms and claim the rank of Sir John Wallace, who defeated the English on the banks of the Sark; and still more those of Scotland's hero and chosen guardian, the illustrious Sir William Wallace?—Vide Burns's noble poem, "The Vision," p. 206.

Mr. Wallace's only surviving brother, Sir James Maxwell Wallace, commands (1840) that distinguished regiment, the 8th dragoon guards. He entered the army in 1805, and rose gradually from cornet to colonel in the following regiments, the 9th, 11th, 21st, and royal dragoons. He had the honour of knighthood, and order of Hanover conferred on him by William IV., and the order of Leopold, by the King of the Belgians, who was many years his commanding officer, as Colonel of the Princess Charlotte's Own, or 5th Dragoon Guards. He was promoted to the rank of colonel at the coronation of Queen Victoria, and attained the privilege of wearing the Belgic Order of Leopold, in consequence of the services he performed on the 16th, 17th, and 18th of June, 1815, during the memorable battles of Quatre Bras, Gemappe, and Waterloo. He married, first, in 1818, Miss E. Hodges, daughter of W. P. Hodges, Esq. of Euston Grey; secondly, the widow of the late Sir Alexander Don, of Newton Don, M.P. for the county of Roxburgh, whose only son, Sir William Don, is the nearest lineal descendant of Burns's friend and patron, James, Earl of Glencairn, to whom the Poet dedicated one of his best odes.—C.]

Ode — Bruce's address to his troops at Bannockburn Tune Lewis Gordon —

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled;
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to glorious victorie

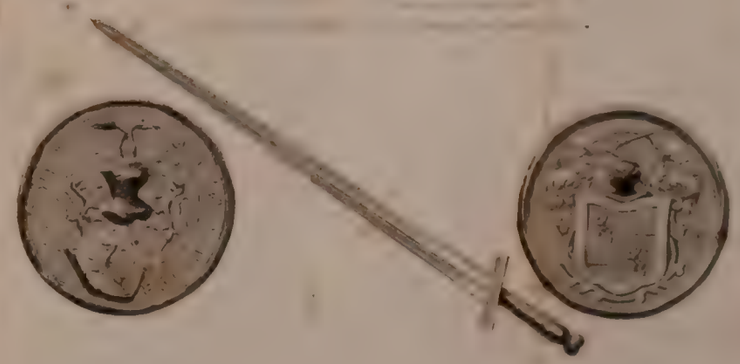
Now's the day, & now's the hour,
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach, proud Edward's power,
Edward! Chains & Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave
Traitor! Coward! turn & flee

Wha for Scolland's king & law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw;
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Caledonian [illegible] wi' me

By Oppressions woes & pains
By your sons in servile chains
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall, they shall be free

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow
Forward let us do, or die!



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FAC SIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL LETTER TO CAPT. MILLER OF DALSWINTON

"SCOTS WHA HAE WI WALLACE BLED."

Dear Sir.

The following Ode is on a subject which I know you by no means regard with indifference

"O, Liberty — — — — — — — —

"Thou mak'st the gloomy face of Nature gay,
"Giv'st beauty to the sun, & pleasure to the day!"

It does me so much good to meet with a Man whose honest bosom glows with the generous enthusiasm the heroic daring of Liberty that I could not forbear sending you a composition of my own on the subject, which I really think is in my best manner. —

I have the honor [illegible] be,
Dr Sir,
your very humble servt
Robt Burns

Captn Miller
Dalswinton

IV.

Wha for SCOTLAND'S king and law,
FREEDOM'S sword will strongly draw;
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Sodger! hero! on wi' me!*

V.

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall, they *shall* be free!

VI.

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
LIBERTY'S in every blow!
FORWARD! let us do, or die!!!

N.B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace:—

"A false usurper sinks in every foe,
And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my head aches miserably. One comfort—I suffer so much, just now, in this world, for last night's joviality, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen!

R. B.

We are happy in being enabled to illustrate this unique STANDARD EDITION of the works of our great SCOTTISH BARD, by an exact FAC-SIMILE of the improved version of this immortal ODE, embellished with accurately engraved representations of the Family Seals of Sir William Wallace of Craigie, chief of the Wallaces in 1464, and of the elder branch of that illustrious family, together with the two-edged sword of the hero. The original ode in question is now where it ought to be, in the hands of Robert Wallace, Esq., of Kelly, M.P. for Greenock, who has kindly lent it to the Editor of this work for the purpose of having a Fac-Simile engraved, to present to the admirers of Burns throughout the world.

The original Ode is accompanied by the following letter of the Poet:—

TO CAPT. MILLER, DALSWINTON.

DEAR SIR:

THE following Ode is on a subject which I know you by no means regard with indifference.

"O Liberty,———
Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,
Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day!"

It does me so much good to meet with a man whose honest bosom glows with the generous enthusiasm, the heroic daring, of Liberty, that I could not forbear sending you a composition of my own on the subject, which I really think is in my best manner.

I have the honour to be,
Dear Sir,
Your very humble Servant,
ROBERT BURNS.

* Afterwards altered to CALEDONIAN! See No. XLV.

No. XLIV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

12th September, 1793.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own, respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ, but there is no disputing about hobby-horses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you make; and to re-consider the whole with attention.

"Dainty Davie" must be sung, two stanzas together, and then the chorus; 'tis the proper way. I agree with you that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of "Fee him, Father," when performed with feeling: but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses are passable. But the sweet song for "Fee him, Father," which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr. James Balfour, the king of good fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with "Fee him, Father," and with "Todlin' hame" also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs. Some Bacchanals I would wish to discard. "Fye, let's a' to the bridal," for instance, is so coarse and vulgar that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken colliers: and "Saw ye my Father" appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying any thing to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. "Gory" presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them, "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shewn the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest,

"Now prepare for honour's bed,
Or for glorious victorie." G. T.

[Some of the opinions expressed in this letter are entitled to respect: others are so singular as to require notice. Neither "Fye, let us a' to the bridal," nor "Saw ye my Father," merit the hard words which Thomson applies to them: for the time in which they were written, they are neither vulgar nor indelicate. Both songs till a late period continued to be sung in the best companies in Scotland, nor has the noble descendant of a house—noble both by genius and birth—hesitated to claim the merit of writing—"Fye, let us a' to the bridal," for one of his ancestors. Something like the taste of Thomson came a few years back over a small coterie of ladies in the north: they laid the songs of Scotland before them, and, placing their fingers on all such parts as they reckoned indelicate, held a consultation upon the meaning, and, after many shakings of the head and whisperings in the ear, they smoothed down without remorse whatever seemed to rise higher than their fanciful level of purity. The concluding paragraph of Thomson's communication requires no comment: that he was wrong the world has likely by this time convinced him. Who can read his altered lines after

"Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie—"

without feeling that such emendations crush the original spirit out of the verse, and give nothing in return, save increase of sound?—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XLV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

"WHO shall decide when doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on re-considering it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "soger! hero!" I will have it "Caledonian! on wi' me!"*

I have scrutinized it, over and over; and to the world, some way or other, it shall go as it is. At the same time it will not in the least hurt me should you leave it out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses.†

I have finished my song to "Saw ye my Father;" and in English, as you will see. That there is a syllable too much for the expression of the air, it is true; but, allow me to say that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and a quaver is not a great matter: however, in that, I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular: my advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are—

Fair Jenny.

Tune—*Saw ye my Father?*

I.

WHERE are the joys I have met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At ev'ning the wild woods among?

II.

No more a-winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flow'rets so fair:
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad sighing care.

* See the annexed fac simile of this improved version.

† ["Mr. Thomson very properly adopted the song of 'Bannockurn,' as the Bard presented it to him. He attached it to the air of 'Lewie Gordon,' and perhaps among the existing airs he could not find a better; but the poetry is suited to a much higher strain of music, and may employ the genius of some Scottish Handel, if any such should in future arise. The reader will have observed that Burns adopted the alterations proposed by his friend and correspondent in former instances, with great readiness; perhaps indeed, on all indifferent occasions. In the present instance, however, he rejected them, though repeatedly urged, with determined resolution. With every respect for the judgment of Mr. Thomson and his friends, we may be satisfied that he did so. He who in preparing for an engagement attempts to withdraw his imagination from images of death will probably have but imperfect success; and is not fitted to stand in the ranks of battle, where the liberties of a kingdom are at issue. Of such men the conquerors at Bannockburn were not composed. Bruce's troops were inured to war, and familiar with all its sufferings and dangers. On the eve of that memorable day, their spirits were without doubt wound up to a pitch of enthusiasm suited to the occasion—a pitch of enthusiasm at which danger becomes attractive, and the most terrific forms of death are no longer terrible. Such a strain of sentiment this heroic 'welcome' may be supposed well calculated to elevate—to raise their hearts high above fear, and to nerve their arms to the utmost pitch of mortal exertion. These observations might be illustrated and supported by reference to the martial poetry of all nations, from the spirit-stirring strains of Tyrtæus to the war-song of General Wolfe. Mr. Thomson's observation, that 'Welcome to your gory bed is a discouraging address,' seems not sufficiently considered. Perhaps, indeed, it may be admitted that the term gory is somewhat objectionable, not on account of its presenting a frightful, but a disagreeable, image to the mind. But a great Poet, uttering his conceptions on an interesting occasion, seeks always to present a picture that is vivid, and is uniformly disposed to sacrifice the delicacies of taste on the altar of the imagination. And it is the privilege of superior genius, by producing a new association, to elevate expressions that were originally low, and thus to triumph over the deficiencies of language. In how many instances might this be exemplified from the works of our immortal Shakspeare:—

"Who would *fardels* bear,
To groan and *sweat* under a weary life;—
When he himself might his *quietus* make
With a *bare bodkin?*"

It were easy to enlarge, but to suggest such reflections is probably sufficient."—CURRIE.]

III.

Is it that summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim, surly winter is near?
No, no! the bees' humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

IV.

Fain would I hide, what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

V.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

Adieu, my dear Sir! The post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks until more leisure.

R. B.

No. XLVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

I HAVE been turning over some volumes of songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs.

For "Muirland Willie," you have, in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, an excellent song, beginning, "Ah why those tears in Nelly's eyes?" As for "The Collier's dochter," take the following old Bacchanal:—

Deluded Swain, the Pleasure.

I.

Deluded swain, the pleasure
The fickle fair can give thee
Is but a fairy treasure—
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

II.

The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds' uncertain motion—
They are but types of woman.

III.

O! art thou not ashamed
To doat upon a feature?
If man thou would'st be named.
Despise the silly creature.

IV.

Go, find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee:
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory.

The faulty line in "Logan-Water," I mend thus:—

"How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?"*

The song, otherwise, will pass. As to "M'Gregoira Rua-Ruth," you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours in the Museum. Vol. ii. p. 81. The song begins:—

"Raving winds around her blowing."†

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are downright Irish. If they were like the "Banks of Banna," for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of "Roy's wife," for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. "Deil tak the wars," is a charming song; so is "Saw ye my Peggy?" "There's nae luck about the house" well deserves a place. I cannot say that "O'er the hills and far awa," strikes me as equal to your selection. "This is no my ain house," is a great favourite air of mine; and, if you will send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of "I hae laid a herrin' in sawt?" I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty: and there are many others of the same kind, pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert, "Fye, let's a' to the bridal" to any other words than its own.

What pleases me as simple and *naïve* disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, "Fye, gie me my coggie, Sirs," "Fye, let's a' to the bridal," with several others of that cast, are, to me, highly pleasing; while, "Saw ye my Father, or saw ye my Mother?" delights me with its descriptive simple pathos. Thus my song, "Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?" pleases myself so much that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but, "Ilka man wears his belt his ain gait."

R. B.

[Burns, in the song to the air of "The Collier's Daughter," seems to have had in mind the famous old northern chant:—

"Fye, gie me my coggie, sirs,
And fye, gie me my coggie;
I wadna gie my three-girred cog,
For a' the queans in Bogie."

The songs which the Poet enumerates in this letter, and the opinions which he expresses on

* See No. XXV. where it is given correctly.

† This Song will be found in page 37[illegible].

their merits, are such as might be looked for from one who felt humour and tenderness, pathos and simplicity, with all the force of true genius. The refinement which would exclude from society such songs as "Fie, gie me my coggie, Sirs," "Fye, let us a' to the bridal," "The Auld Gudeman," "Meg o' the Mill," and others of a similar stamp, is of a very questionable kind.]

No. XLVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

October, 1793.

YOUR last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas! poor Erskine!* The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication has, till now, scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of the "Quaker's Wife;" though, by the bye, an old Highland gentleman and a deep antiquarian tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of "Leiger m' choss." The following verses, I hope, will please you, as an English song to the air:—

My lovely Nancy.

Tune—*The Quaker's Wife.*

I.

THINE am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

II.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

III.

Take away these rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure:
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

IV.

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.†

Your objection to the English Song I proposed for "John Anderson, my jo," is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. The song was never in print, which I think is so much in your favour. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit.

SONG.

BY GAVIN TURNBULL.

O CONDESCEND, dear charming maid,
My wretched state to view;
A tender swain to love betray'd,
And sad despair, by you.

While here, all melancholy,
My passion I deplore,
Yet, urg'd by stern resistless fate,
I love thee more and more.

I heard of love, and with disdain
The urchin's power denied:
I laugh'd at every lover's pain,
And mock'd them when they sigh'd.

But how my state is alter'd!
Those happy days are o'er;
For all thy unrelenting hate,
I love thee more and more.

O yield, illustrious beauty, yield!
No longer let me mourn;
And, tho' victorious in the field,
Thy captive do not scorn.

Let generous pity warm thee,
My wonted peace restore;
And, grateful, I shall bless thee still,
And love thee more and more.

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale will suit as an English song to the air, "There was a lass, and she was fair." By the bye, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS., which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favour; but I like some of his pieces very much:—

THE NIGHTINGALE.

BY G. TURNBULL.

THOU sweetest minstrel of the grove
That ever tried the plaintive strain;
Awake thy tender tale of love,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

For, tho' the muses deign to aid,
And teach him smoothly to complain;
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

* The honourable A. Erskine, brother to Lord Kelly, whose melancholy death Mr. Thomson had communicated in an excellent letter which he has suppressed.—CURRIE.

† [We owe this song, it is said, to the charms of Clarinda. The words bear no resemblance to the old strains which accompany the air of "The Quaker's wife," to which it is adapted:—

"Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
Merrily danced the Quaker;
Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
Wi' a' her bairns about her."

The lover of old English poetry will perceive a resemblance between the third verse of the song of Burns, and that truly exquisite one attributed to Shakspeare:—

"Take, oh! take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn;
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but sealed in vain."

All day, with Fashion's gaudy sons,
In sport she wanders o'er the plain;
Their tales approves, and still she shuns
The notes of her forsaken swain.

When evening shades obscure the sky,
And bring the solemn hours again,
Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to 'Lewie Gordon:'

LAURA.

By G. Turnbull.

Let me wander where I will,
By shady wood, or winding rill;
Where the sweetest May-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers;
Where the linnet's early song
Echoes sweet the woods among:
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

If at rosy dawn I choose
To indulge the smiling muse:
If I court some cool retreat,
To avoid the noontide heat;
If beneath the moon's pale ray,
Thro' unfrequented wilds I stray;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

When at night the drowsy god
Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
And to fancy's wakeful eyes
Bids celestial visions rise;
While with boundless joy I rove
Thro' the fairy land of love:
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.*

[Gavin Turnbull was the Author of a volume entitled "Poetical Essays," published in Glasgow, in 1788.]

No. XLVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

7th November, 1793.

My good Sir:

After so long a silence it gave me peculiar pleasure to recognize your well-known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive that all was not well with you. I am happy to find, however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

I have to thank you for your English song to "Leiger m' choss," which I think extremely good, although the colouring is warm. Your friend Mr. Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit; and, as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer as English songs, to the airs yet unprovided. G. T.

[During almost the whole period that Burns lived in Dumfries, he was suffering from the twofold misery of misrepresentation and poverty. His farming speculations had drained his pockets of money, and the base and the malevolent were labouring to deprive him of bread. Well might he say as he did, that he had small heart to sing. Can the lark warble under the wing of the raven?—Cunningham.]

No. XLIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

December, 1793.

Tell me how you like the following verses to the tune of "Jo Janet:"—

I.

Husband, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife,
Yet I am not your slave, sir.
"One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy;
Is it man, or woman, say,
My spouse, Nancy?"

*

II.

If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
And so, good b'ye, allegiance!†
"Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse, Nancy."

* ["Like all men of true genius," says Motherwell, "Burns was the least susceptible of literary jealousy, and the first to acknowledge the claims of a co-rival to poetical distinction." In "Alexander Campbell's History of Scottish Poetry," there appears this brief notice of the work of one of whom Burns speaks in so flattering a manner:—

"No sooner had the Paisley press produced the poems of Mr. Ebenezer Picken, than the Poetical Essays of Gavin Turnbull, in 1778, issued from the press of Mr. David Niven of Glasgow. The 'Poetical Essays' of Mr. Turnbull are such as do him the highest credit. I am hopeful he will go on; for, in truth, the specimens already before the public give, so far as I understand, uncommon satisfaction. It was the peculiar felicity of Burns, on his first entrance on the literary stage, to be patronized and supported, even to a degree rarely the lot of the most consummate talents. It became for a time the *rage*, to use a fashionable phrase, to talk of him, recite his pieces, and boast of having spent an evening in company with the Ayr-shire bard. No wonder then, if the contemporaries of Burns were neglected by those who are looked up to as the umpires of literary reputation. But one consolation remained; the ingenious author escaped the most poignant mortification, usually attendant on talents unaccompanied by prudence, that is, the supercilious sneer, indicative of altered opinion, and its humiliating consequence, cold indifference. Did not Burns experience all this?"]

† Var.—If the word is still obey,
Always love and fear you,
I will take myself away,
And never more come near you.

III.

My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think, how you will bear it.
"I will hope and trust in heaven,
Nancy, Nancy;
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse, Nancy."

IV.

Well, sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you;
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you.
"I'll wed another, like my dear
Nancy, Nancy;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse, Nancy."*

Wilt thou be my Dearie?

Air—*The Suter's Dochter.*

I.

Wilt thou be my dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

II.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or, if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou, for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'est me.
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

[This song was said to have been composed in honour of the charms of Janet Miller, of Dalswinton, mother to the present Earl of Mar, and at that time one of the loveliest women in all the south of Scotland. The Poet thought so well of it that he gave a copy to Johnson as well as to Thomson.]

No. L.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 17th April, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR:

OWING to the distress of our friend for the loss of his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter, I had not an opportunity till lately of perusing it.† How sorry I am to find Burns saying, "canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" while he is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case—"Go," says the doctor, "and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good humour." "Alas! Sir," replied the patient, "I am that unhappy Carlini!"

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly, and I trust that by some means or other it will soon take place; but your Bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserable weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your "Cotter's Saturday Night," and, if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral and humorous kind, he is perhaps unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females, and his colouring is sombre; otherwise, his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.‡

I like the music of the "Sutor's dochter," and will consider whether it shall be added to the last volume; your verses to it are pretty; but your humorous English song to suit "Jo Janet," is inimitable. What think you of the air, "Within a mile of Edinburgh?" It has

* [In composing this song the Poet had in his eye the lyrics of the olden time: the more immediate object of his imitation was "My Jo Janet," in the collection of Allan Ramsay, beginning—

"Sweet Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye come to the Bass, then
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a keeking-glass, then."
"Keek into the draw well,
Janet, Janet,
And there ye'll see your bonnie sel,'
My Jo Janet."

Burns regretted that he had not sooner turned his thoughts upon lyrics of a conversational character.]

† A letter to Mr. Cunningham, to be found in the correspondence, under the date of Feb. 25th, 1794.

‡ ["The painter who pleased Burns and Thomson so much with his shepherds and shepherdesses was David Allan; he studied in Rome and in London, but acquired little fame from his classic efforts compared to what he achieved by his delineations of the pastoral scenes and happy peasantry of his native country. With loveliness he could do little; but give him an old cottage, with older plenishing, and still older inhabitants, and he could do all but work miracles. An ancient chair with a dog sleeping—or seeming to sleep—under it: an old woman twirling her distaff in the sun, with her cat and her chickens around her; or an old man sitting ruminating at his own fire-side, with his Bible on his knees, inspired him at once; and in subjects such as these he has never been surpassed. His illustrations of Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd will bear out these commendations; his Glaud and Symon, his Mause and Madge, are inimitable; not so his Patie and his Peggie; his forte lay in representing humorous characters, and he failed when youth and loveliness came before him to be limned. His mantle, with a double portion of his power, has fallen on David Wilkie."—CUNNINGHAM.]

always struck me as a modern English imitation, but it is said to be Oswald's, and is so much liked that I believe I must include it. The verses are little better than namby-pamby. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two?

G. T.

No. LI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May, 1794.

My dear Sir:

I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased; I would humbly propose, instead of the younker knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and, though an unknown, is yet a superior, artist with the burin, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the Gentle Shepherd; and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and by. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, which she calls "The banks of Cree." Cree is a beautiful romantic stream: and, as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it:—

Here is the Glen.

Tune—*Banks of Cree.*

I.

Here is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village-bell has told the hour—
O what can stay my lovely maid?

II.

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
'Tis not the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

III.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little faithful mate to cheer,
At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

IV.

And art thou come? and art thou true?
O welcome, dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew
Along the flow'ry banks of Cree.

[The Poet had a double task to perform for the family of Kerroughtree: he wrote lyrics in honour of the lady, and lampoons for the benefit of the laird. The first was a task according to his heart, and he performed it the readier that Lady Elizabeth Heron was fair and accomplished: of his success in the latter, the Heron Ballads have already informed the reader.]

No. LII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

July 1794.

Is there no news yet of Pleyel? Or is your work to be at a dead stop until the allies set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thraldom of democratic discords? Alas the day! And woe is me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of millions—*

* * * *

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honoured friend of mine, Mr. Graham of Fintray. I wrote, on the blank side of the title-page, the following address to the young lady:—

Here, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift; tho' humble he who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian feeling † in thy breast
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among;
But peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or love ecstatic wake his seraph song:

Or pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born piety her sanction seals.

No. LIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 10th August, 1794.

My dear Sir:

I owe you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last.

* A portion of this letter has been left out, for reasons that will be easily imagined.

† ["'It were to be wished,' says Currie, 'that instead of 'ruffian feeling' in the second verse, that the Bard had used a less rugged epithet—*e. g.* ruder.' Burns seldom failed to clothe his thoughts in suitable language: the sentiment put on at once its livery of words, and he was loth to make alterations. The remark of Currie strikes, not at this expression alone, but at the general language of the Poet's verse. We must take him as we find him; had he softened down his masculine energy, he would have robbed his poems of a great charm: the rose would be less lovely were its thorns removed, and how would the thistle look without its prickles? The cry of the eagle can never be tamed down into the song of the lark, nor the wild note of the blackbird sobered into that of the wren."—Cunningham.]

I fear it will be as you say, I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends; but, nevertheless, I am very desirous to be prepared with the poetry, and, as the season approaches in which your muse of Coila visits you, I trust I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews! G. T.

[Burns in the preceding letter, and Thomson in this, allude to the commencement of that terrible war which shook the thrones of Europe, and strewed hill and vale with slaughtered bodies. Democratic ferocity on one side, and kingly tyranny on the other, turned the Continent into a battle-field: the notes of Pleyel were unheard amid the trumpet-sound and the din of artillery: and some of the songs of Burns, expressing a manly—a true Scottish-love for freedom—were for a time unacceptable to the people of Britain.]

No. LIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

30th August, 1794.

The last evening, as I was straying out, and thinking of "O'er the hills and far away," I spun the following stanza for it; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store, like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it, at first; but I own that now it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor songs; but, as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of the love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception —"Sweet Annie frae the Sea-beach came." Now for the song:—

On the Seas and far away.

Tune—*O'er the Hills and far away.*

I.

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad.
How can I the thought forego?
He's on the seas to meet the foe.
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love:
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are with him that's far away.

On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day
Are aye with him that's far away.

II.

When in summer noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in this scorching sun
My sailor's thund'ring at his gun:
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!
Fate do with me what you may—
Spare but him that's far away!

III.

At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power;
As the storms the forest tear,
And thunders rend the howling air,
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray,
For his weal that's far away.

IV.

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his ravage end,
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet:
Then may heaven with prosp'rous gales
Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey—
My dear lad that's far away.

On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are aye with him that's far away.

I gave you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness. R. B.

No. LV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 16*th Sept.*, 1794.

My dear Sir:

You have anticipated my opinion of "On the seas and far away;" I do not think it one of your very happy productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptation.

The second stanza is the least to my liking, particularly "Bullets, spare my only joy." Confound the bullets! It might, perhaps, be objected to the third verse, "At the starless midnight hour," that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweetheart. The tune, it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the choruses.

[The objections raised by Thomson to this song were disapproved of by Currie, and many exquisite judges of poetry. The verses proposed to be omitted are the most original and touching: the third, in particular, is a noble one, and in keeping with the excited feelings of a lady whose love is on the great deep, exposed to the accidents of battle and the extremities of the tempest.]

No. LVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Sept., 1794.

I SHALL withdraw my "On the seas and far away" altogether: it is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world to try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, abortions and all; and as such, pray look over them and forgive them, and burn them.* I am flattered at your adopting "Ca' the yowes to the knowes," as it was owing to me that it ever saw the light. About seven years ago, I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr. Clunie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll, which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

Ca' the Yowes.

I.

CA' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes—
My bonnie dearie!
Hark the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Clouden's woods amang!
Then a faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.

II.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro' the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glid
To the moon sae clearly.

III.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.

IV.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt to love and heaven sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.

V.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart;
I can die—but canna part—
My bonnie dearie!
Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather growes,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes—
My bonnie dearie! †

I shall give you my opininion of your other newly adopted songs, my first scribbling fit.

R. B.

No. LVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

September, 1794.

Do you know a blackguard Irish song, called "Onagh's Water-fall?" The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble rustic muse, to expect that every effort of her's shall have merit: still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the Scots Musical Museum; and, as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song, to the air above mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing before ladies.

She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Tune—*Onagh's Water-fall.*

I.

SAE flaxen were her ringlets,‡
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughing een o' bonnie blue.

* [This Virgilian order of the Poet should, I think, be disobeyed with the respect to the song in question, the second Stanza excepted.—NOTE BY THOMSON.]

† [The water, on the banks of which the scene of this lyric is laid, is a beautiful stream, and known by three names, Cairn, Dalgoner, and Clouden, or Cluden. Under the first name, it finds its way over wild uplands, among flocks of sheep and coveys of black grouse; under the second, it washes the walls of old castles, rural villages, and seems at one place to be lost among thick groves of hazel and holly; and, under the third name, it finds its way among romantic rocks, where it forms a succession of deep clear pools, connected by leaps or falls, the individual murmurings of which are any thing but unmusical; and, finally, it unites itself with the Nith in the shadow of the towers of Lincluden. Burns formed this song upon an older lyric, an amended version of which has been previously inserted.]

‡ [The lady with the flaxen tresses was Jean Lorimer, or Mrs. Whelpdale, as she loved to be called; her husband had, at this period, deserted her, and she was oftener to be found

Her smiling, sae wyling,
Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto these rosy lips to grow!
Such was my Chloris' bonnie face,
When first her bonnie face I saw;
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

II.

Like harmony her motion;
Her pretty ankle is a spy,
Betraying fair proportion,
Wad mak a saint forget the sky.
Sae warming, sae charming,
Her faultless form and gracefu' air;
Ilk feature—auld nature
Declar'd that she could do nae mair.
Her's are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering beauty's sovereign law;
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best o' a'.

III.

Let others love the city,
And gaudy show at sunny noon;
Gie me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon;
Fair beaming, and streaming,
Her silver light the boughs amang;
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang:
There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o' truth and love,
And say thou lo'est me best of a'?

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs decried, and always, without any hypocrisy, confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favorite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for "Rothemurche's Rant," an air which puts me in raptures; and, in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. "Rothemurche," he says, is an air both original and beautiful; and, on his recommendation, I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth, or last part, for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.*

I have begun anew, "Let me in this ae night." Do you think we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have the *denouement* to be successful or otherwise? Should she "let him in" or not?

Did you not once propose "The Sow's tail to Geordie" as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs Thomson's Christian name, and yours, I am afraid, is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you and her the hero and heroine of the little piece.

How do you like the following epigram, which I wrote the other day, on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Doctor Maxwell was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following:—

To Dr. Maxwell, †

ON MISS JESSIE STAIG'S RECOVERY.

MAXWELL, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny;
You save fair Jessie from the grave?—
An angel could not die.‡

---

in Dumfries than at Kemmis-hall, the residence of her father. Of her beauty something has been already said: her figure, it may be added, was rather above than below the middle size, and proportioned like one of the truest productions of an ancient statuary. Her hair, which she wore flowing and abundant, fell almost in armfuls over her round neck and white shoulders; it was inclining to be waving rather than curling, and was darker than what the epithet flaxen seems to intimate. She danced and sung with much grace and sweetness; her eyes were large and lustrous, and laughed more than did her lips when she was pleased. This minuteness will be forgiven by those who reflect that to her charms we owe some of the finest lyrics in the language.]

* In the original follow here two stanzas of a song, beginning "Lassie wi' the lintwhite locks," which will be found at full length afterwards.—CURRIE.

† ["Of Dr. Maxwell, a word or two was said in the life of the Poet. He was a skilful physician, and an accomplished gentleman. He mingled in the stormy doings of the early days of the French revolution, and escaped with difficulty, it is alleged, from the far-reaching and fierce clutches of the Jacobin Club. Tired of revolutions and politics, he retired to his native place, and, by his manners and conversation, sustained the fame of the noble house of Maxwell, of which he was a descendant."—CUNNINGHAM.]

‡ [Miss Jessy Staig married Major Miller, and died young. She was the Jessy of the song,—

"True-hearted was he, the sad swain of the Yarrow."]

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle! R. B.

No. LVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

I PERCEIVE the sprightly muse is now attendant upon her favourite poet, whose "wood notes wild" are become as enchanting as ever. "She says she lo'es me best of a'," is one of the pleasantest table songs I have seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit. I am far from undervaluing your taste for the strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the same way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely woman, without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having the "Sow's tail," particularly as your proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. Geordie, as you observe, is a name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs. Thomson's name (Katharine) is not at all poetical. Retain Jeanie, therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your "Ca' the ewes" is a precious little morçeau. Indeed I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you whether you never seriously turned your thoughts upon dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendour. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas: few or none of those which have appeared since the "Duenna" possess much poetical merit: there is little in the conduct of the fable, or in the dialogue, to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs, of course, would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composer—Storace for Drury-lane, or Shield for Covent-garden; both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on: so it may be with the namby-pamby tribe of flowery scribblers; but, were you to address Mr. Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.*

No. LIX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 14th October, 1794.

THE last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections. I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added are inclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs I expected from him, which are, in general, elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published, by Mr. Ritson, an Englishman?† I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shows clearly that Mr. Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish; and that his classification of the airs according to the æras when they were composed is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq., he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it, uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a packing to make room for Peter's. Of you he speaks with some respect, but gives you a passing hit or two for daring to dress up a little some old foolish songs for the Museum. His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says,

* ["Our Bard had before received the same advice, and certainly took it so far into consideration as to have cast about for a subject."—CURRIE.]

† ["Of such a person, so skilful and so plodding—so dry and so doubting—so captious and sarcastic as Joseph Ritson, the Poet of Ayr had not heard, till his name was announced by Thomson. He was one of the most laborious of our later antiquaries; his birth in a northern English county made him familiar with the Scottish dialect and with old ballad lore; his education as a lawyer sharpened his faculties, and disciplined him for habits of research, while his love of all that was old, and strange, and uncouth in literature, amounted to a passion which, in the end, overpowered his reason. He had little or no poetic feeling; he was a Jacobite, too, and a bitter one; but, by a transition not uncommon, he became a Jacobin, and, as Citizen Ritson, is yet remembered by those who had no sympathy for his researches in song. To the task of editorship he brought an acuteness which all publishers of other men's verses soon learned to dread; and along with this came a suspicion that, as Chatterton, Pinkerton, and others had imposed new verses as old on the world, there was nothing real and genuine to be had. He boldly charged Percy with the forgery of many of the 'Reliques of Old English Poetry,' an accusation which has since been triumphantly refuted; and he attacked the learned and laborious Warton with an acrimony new in English criticism. 'All his doings to rehearse' would take many pages; his dissertation upon Scottish song is searching and accurate, nor is his selection of lyrics much amiss, though he has committed several mistakes in matters of taste."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

from the oldest collections and best authorities: many of them, however, have such a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognize the features of our favourites. By going to the oldest collections of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed: and, as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so, even supposing the first collectors to have possessed the industry, the taste, and discernment to choose the best they could hear (which is far from certain), still it must evidently be a chance whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved: and, without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other.

G. T.

No. LX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

19th October, 1794.

My dear Friend:

By this morning's post I have your list, and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's fly, and I wish you would call on him and take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two; so, please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, persuade you to adopt my favourite, "Craigie-burn Wood," in your selection: it is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact *(entre nous)*, is in a manner, to me, what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclaiver about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your book?—No! no!—Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song; to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs; do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself on a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile, the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business; if you like my idea of "When she cam ben she bobbit," the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly, when set to another air, may, perhaps, do instead of worse stanzas:—

Saw ye my Phely.*

(QUASI DICAT PHILLIS.)

Tune—*When she cam ben she bobbit.*

I.

O saw ye my dear, my Phely?
O saw ye my dear, my Phely?
She's down i' the grove, she's wi' a new love,
She winna come hame to her Willy.

II.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
She lets thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her Willy.

III.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair—
Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

* [The despairing swain in "Saw ye my Phely" is said to have been Stephen Clarke, musician. The lady whom he persuaded the Poet to accuse of coldness and inconstancy was Phillis M'Murdo. His fantastic woes only excited a smile on her part: nor could they be welcome to a family where he had been introduced as a teacher. Musicians have sometimes fiddled and lira-lira-la'd themselves into the affections of high-born dames. The air to which these verses were composed took its name from a song of considerable merit, beginning thus:—

"O when she came ben she bobbit fu' law,
And when she came ben she bobbit fu' law,
When she came ben, she kissed Cockpen,
And then denied that she did it at a'.

"O never look down my lassie ava,
O never look down my lassie ava,
Thy coatie and sark are thy ain hands' wark,
And Lady Jane's sel was never sae braw."]

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. "The Posie" (in the Museum) is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs. Burns's voice.* It is well known in the West Country, but the old words are trash. By the bye, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which "Roslin castle" is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. "Strathallan's Lament" is mine: the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. "Donocht-Head" is not mine: I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the Edinburgh Herald; and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it.† "Whistle o'er the lave o't" is mine: the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and, by all the old musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

"Andrew and his cutty gun." The song to which this is set in the Museum is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore.

"How long and dreary is the night." I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and, to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page:—

How lang and dreary is the Night.

Tune—*Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.*

I.

How lang and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie;
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.

For oh! her lanely nights are lang:
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie.

II.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie;
And now what seas between us roar—
How can I be but eerie?

III.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours!
The joyless day how dreary!
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

For oh! her lanely nights are lang;
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie. ‡

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time so charmingly that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world, as naked as Mr. What-d'ye-call-um (Ritson) has done in his London collection.

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at "Duncan Gray," to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance:

Let not Woman e'er complain.

Tune—*Duncan Gray.*

I.

Let not woman e'er complain
Of inconstancy in love;
Let not woman e'er complain
Fickle man is apt to rove:

* This and the other scenes to which the Poet alludes, had appeared in the "Museum," and Thomson had enquired whether they were our Bard's.—Currie.

† ["Donocht-Head," which the Poet praises so highly, was written by a gentleman, now dead, of the name of Pickering, who lived at Newcastle. There are some who still believe it to be by Burns himself, I know not on what grounds, except that it is equally natural and original:—

"Keen blaws the wind o'er Donocht-Head,[a]
The snaw drives snelly thro' the dale,
The Gaber-lunzie tirls my sneck,
And, shivering, tells his waefu' tale.
Cauld is the night, oh let me in,
And dinna let your minstrel fa',
And dinna let his winding-sheet
Be naething but a wreath o' snaw.

Full ninety winters hae I seen,
And pip'd where gor-cocks whirring flew,
And mony a day I've danc'd I ween
To lilts which from my drone I blew.

My Eppie wak'd, and soon she cry'd,
Get up, guidman, and let him in;
For weel ye ken the winter night
Was short when he began his din.

My Eppie's voice, O wow it's sweet,
Even tho' she bans and scaulds a wee;
But when it's tun'd to sorrow's tale,
O, haith, its doubly dear to me!
Come in, auld carl, I'll steer my fire,
I'll make it bleeze a bonnie flame;
Your bluid is thin, ye've tint the gate,
Ye should nae stray sae far frae hame.

Nae hame have I, the minstrel said,
Sad party-strife o'erturn'd my ha';
And, weeping at the eve of life,
I wander thro' a wreath o' snaw."

"This affecting poem is apparently incomplete. The author need not be ashamed to own himself. It is worthy of Burns or of Macneil."—Currie.]

[a] A mountain in the North.

‡ [The earlier version of "How long and dreary is the night," will be found in another part of the volume; the measure is different, as well as many of the lines, and it is directed to be sung to a Gaelic air. Both songs are simple and affecting.]

Look abroad through nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change;
Ladies, would it not be strange,
Man should then a monster prove?

II.

Mark the winds, and mark the skies;
Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow:
Sun and moon but set to rise,
Round and round the seasons go:
Why then ask of silly man
To oppose great nature's plan?
We'll be constant while we can—
You can be no more, you know.

Since the above, I have been out in the country, taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page of this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got into song; and, returning home, I composed the following:—

The Lover's Morning Salute to his Mistress.*

Tune—*Deil tak the Wars.*

I.

Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature?
Rosy morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud which nature
Waters wi the tears o' joy:
Now thro' the leafy woods,
And by the reeking floods,
Wild nature's tenants, freely, gladly stray;
The lintwhite in his bower
Chants o'er the breathing flower;†
The lav'rock to the sky
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.

II.

Phœbus, gilding the brow o' morning,
Banishes ilk darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When absent frae my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With startless gloom o'ercast my sullen sky;
But when, in beauty's light,
She meets my ravish'd sight,
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart—
'Tis then I wake to life, to light, and joy.‡

If you honour my verses by setting the air to them, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood.

I enclose you a musical curiosity, an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have, Clarke has set a bass to it, and I intend to put it into the Musical Museum. Here follow the verses I intend for it:—

The auld Man.

Tune—*The Winter of Life.*

I.

But lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoic'd the day;
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled,
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

II.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
Sinks in Time's wintry rage.
Oh! age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why com'st thou not again?

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English Songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please—whether this miserable drawling hotch-potch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

R. B.

* [The Poet has himself, in part, ascribed the origin of this song to Chloris.—"He sat sae late and drank sae stout," at his friend's house, that the morning sun rose on him on his way home, and suggested these verses to his excited fancy. The complicated measure has communicated a laboured-like air to the stanzas: they are full, however, of truth and nature: they were favourites with the Poet, from the trouble which they cost him, perhaps; his manuscripts afford sundry variations.]

† [Var.— "Now to the streaming fountain,
Or up the heathy mountain,
The heart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers
His lay the linnet pours;
The lav'rock to the sky, &c."]

‡ [Var.— "When frae my Chloris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
Then night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky;
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of beauty's light:
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart,
'Tis then, 'tis then I wake to life and joy."]

No. LXI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, October 27th, 1794.

I AM sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she, whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard, that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. "Craigie-burn Wood" must certainly be adopted into my family, since she is the object of the song; but, in the name of decency, I must beg a new chorus verse from you. "O to be lying beyond thee, dearie," is, perhaps, a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs: the idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham in sending you Ritson's Scottish Collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English Collection, which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his historical Essay on Scottish song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from "Maggie Lauder." She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee. I am much inclined to get a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P.S. Pray what do your anecdotes say concerning "Maggie Lauder?" Was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely "spier for her, if you ca'd at Anstruther town."

G. T.

[Of Maggie Lauder much has been written by annotators, but no light has been thrown upon either her birth-place or her station: she is likely a creation of the minstrel muse, and belongs to the imagination. The mind of the world is essentially prosaic; it loves truth, and rejoices to find that sometimes the characters which fiction presents are derived from originals of flesh and blood. Maggie Lauder has lately obtained a longer lease of life at the hands of a northern poet. She is the heroine in Tennant's Anster Fair, a poem of great originality as well as force—the forerunner of what has been called the Beppo School of verse.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. LXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

November, 1794.

MANY thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present: it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c., for your work. I intend drawing them up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c., it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work. In my last I told you my objections to the song you had selected for "My lodging is on the cold ground." On my visit, the other day, to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration), she suggested an idea, which I, on my return from the visit, wrought into the following song:—

Chloris.

I.

MY Chloris,* mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

II.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings;
For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

III.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lighted ha':
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blithe, in the birken shaw.

IV.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours,
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

V.

The shepherd, in the flow'ry glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo:
The courtier tells a finer tale—
But is his heart as true?

VI.

These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine:
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tis na love like mine.

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* [In another copy of this song it begins thus;—
Behold, my love, how green the groves.]

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral?—I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of "*ma chere Amie.*" I assure you, I was never more in earnest in my life than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last.—Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where Love is liberty, and Nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasure I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase.

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs, of which the measure is something similar to what I want; and, with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse, you will find in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, I have cut down for an English dress to your "Daintie Davie," as follows:—

The charming Month of May.

I.

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;
From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flowery mead she goes,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

II.

The feather'd people you might see,
Perch'd all around, on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody,
They hail the charming Chloe;
Till, painting gay the eastern skies,
The glorious sun began to rise,
Out-rivall'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to "Rothemurche's Rant;" and you have Clarke to consult, as to the set of the air for singing:—

Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks.

Tune—*Rothemurche's Rant.*

I.

Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
O wilt thou share its joy wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

II.

And when the welcome simmer-shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine bower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

III.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way;
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

IV.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest;
Enclasped to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O. *

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O? †

---

* [In some of the copies of this lyric the last verse runs thus;—

And should the howling wintry blast
Disturb my lassie's midnight rest,
I'll fauld thee to my faithful breast,
And comfort thee, my dearie, O!

CURRIE.]

† [It is said that the wife of Nollekens, the sculptor, was of a disposition so jealous that she would not allow him to have living models to finish his fancy-figures by; and, as the sculptor could not imagine what he did not see, he was compelled to desist from the modelling of Venuses and Graces. In like manner, there are some poets write best from what they see; they look, and talk, and think, till their feelings and

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well: if not, I will insert it in the Museum.

R. B.

No. LXIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

I AM out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air as "Deil tak the wars," to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of "Saw ye my Father;" by heavens, the odds is gold to brass! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius, Tom D'Urfey; so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song, by Sheridan, in the "Duenna," to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins—

"When sable night each drooping plant restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness, and love. I have again gone over my song to the tune, as follows.*

Now for my English song to "Nancy's to the Greenwood," &c.:—

Farewell, thou Stream.

I.

FAREWELL, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
O mem'ry! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish,
To feel a fire in every vein,
Nor dare disclose my anguish.

II.

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover;
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor can'st, relieve me;
But oh, Eliza, hear one prayer—
For pity's sake forgive me!

III.

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
'Till fears no more had sav'd me:
Th' unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming ruin.

There is an air, "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight," to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson.—"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon;" this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer in your good town,—a gentleman whom, possibly, you know,—was in company with our friend Clarke; and talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr. Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm, and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is, that, in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the black keys; but this account which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of several years ago. Now, to show you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air;—nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a Countess informed me that the first person who introduced the air into this country was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult, then, to ascertain the truth respecting our poesy and music! I, myself, have lately seen a couple of ballads sung

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fancy rise into the region of poesie, and then empty their hearts into the verse. There are others in whose imaginations eternal beauty resides, and who have no occasion to kindle themselves up by the presence of living loveliness. Burns seems to have belonged to the former class; not but that beauty had a permanent abode in his fancy, but the excitement which the voice and looks of woman occasioned saved him the trouble of drawing upon his imagination.

Those acquainted with the Poet's life and habits of study will perceive much of both in the sweet song of "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks." Dumfries is a small town; a few steps carried Burns to green lanes, daisied brae-sides, and quiet stream-banks. Men returning from labour were sure to meet him "all under the light of the moon," sauntering forth as if he had no aim; his hands behind his back, his hat turned up a little behind by the shortness of his neck, and noting all, yet seeming to note nothing. Yet those who got near without being seen might hear him humming some old Scottish air, and fitting verses to it—the scene and the season supplying the imagery, and the Jeanies, the Nancies, the Phelies, and the Jessies of his admiration furnishing bright eyes, white hands, and waving tresses, as the turn of the song required.—CUNNINGHAM.]

* See the "Lover's Morning Salute to his Mistress," p. 490. Our Bard remarks upon it, "I could easily throw this into an English mould; but, to my taste, in the simple and the tender of the pastoral song, a sprinkling of the old Scottish has an inimitable effect."—CURRIE.

through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them.

I thank you for admitting "Cragie-burn Wood," and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new "Cragie-burn Wood" altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request; 'tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs.* It wrings my honest pride to write you this, but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make you some amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for, when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

R. B.

No. LXIV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

15th November, 1794.

My good Sir:

Since receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr. Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the "Caledonian Hunt" is more Bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited for a man's voice, and the second part, in many instances, cannot be sung, at concert pitch, but by a female voice. A song, thus performed, makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent me is admirable, and will be an universal favourite.

Your verses for "Rothemurche" are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to Chloris, for "Deil tak the Wars," so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures with them. Your song for "My lodging is on the cold ground," is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted with it. Some of your Chlorises, I suppose, have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this colour; else we differ about it; for I should scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, and reading that she had lint-white locks!

"Farewell thou stream that winding flows," I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after "Nancy:" at least it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish, and melancholy English, verses! The more that the two sets of verses resemble each other in their general character, the better. Those you have manufactured for "Dainty Davie" will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes:† I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that any thing from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs: the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff.

No. LXV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

19th November, 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though indeed you may thank yourself for the tedium of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my duet, which you

* [Chloris, it is said, was so pleased to see herself reflected in verse, and associated with the genius of Burns, that she showed the works of Thomson to her friends or admirers; and, as they were not few, it soon became publicly known that her flaxen locks, blue eyes, and "passing, pleasing tongue" would communicate new charms to northern song. This, it sems, gave some offence to the more staid and stately of the Poet's friends; they remonstrated with him, not on the impropriety of resorting to the beauty of a farmer's daughter to bestow grace or tenderness on his strains, but because he had given her copies of his songs, both in manuscript and print, which, in the careless gaiety of her nature, she exhibited to the world. The Poet saw that he had acted imprudently; a mutual friend was employed to reclaim the manuscripts; the lady gave them up with reluctance, but retained, and, perhaps, still retains, the work of Thomson.]

† ["The anecdotes promised by the Poet were but in part written: a rich treat has thus been lost to all his admirers. He would have given us a chapter on the human heart, informed us of the various feelings and impulses under which he wrote his lyrics—the hour and the season in which they were produced—the walks in which he mused, and the heroines who lent look and life to the strains. Of each we would have known as much as we do of Highland Mary; nor could this have been otherwise than acceptable to the ladies themselves. We have been left to tradition, or conjecture, or accidental intimations: and the honour done to the charms of one has, we fear, sometimes been conferred on another. The Poet wrote notes of another kind on Johnson's Museum: These will be found in another portion of the volume. They are at once old and new, serious and comic, full of anecdotes and scraps of quaint and curious song, and marked everywhere with that peculiar spirit and feeling which distinguished Burns amongst all the sons of Caledonia."—Cunningham.]

were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old:—

O Philly, happy be that Day.

Tune—*The Sow's Tail.*

HE.

O Philly, happy be that day,
When, roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willy, aye I bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,
Whilst thou didst pledge the Powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er sae welcome to my eye
As is a sight o' Philly.

SHE.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
Tho' wafting o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring
As meeting o' my Willy.

HE.

The bee that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower,
Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weet
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy.

HE.

Let fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

What's a' the joys that gowd can gie?
I care na wealth a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

Tell me, honestly, how you like it; and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name, Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about it, which unfits it for anything except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr. Ritson, ranks with me, as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity: whereas, simplicity is as much *eloignée* from vulgarity, on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit on the other.

I agree with you, as to the air "Craigie-burn Wood," that a chorus would, in some degree, spoil the effect; and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not, however, a case in point with "Rothemurche;" there, as in "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch," a chorus goes, to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with "Roy's Wife" as well as "Rothemurche." In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting-note in both tunes has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of:—

Try { *O Roy's* Wife of Aldivalloch. / *O Lassie* wi' the lint-white locks.
and
compare with { *Roy's* Wife of Aldivalloch. / *Lassie* wi' the lint-white locks.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true furor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas, in the first insipid method, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong I beg pardon of the *cognoscenti.*

"The Caledonian Hunt" is so charming that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish Bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, "Todlin Hame" is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and "Andrew and his cutty Gun" is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those

men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown? It has given me many a heart-ache. Apropos to Bacchanalian songs in Scottish; I composed one yesterday, for an air I like much—"Lumps o' pudding":—

Contented wi' Little.

Tune—*Lumps o' Pudding.*

I.

CONTENTED wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I foregather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp, as they're creeping alang,
Wi a cog o' guid swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

II.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a sodger, and life is a faught;
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

III.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' guid fellowship sowthers it a':
When at the blithe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

IV.

Blind chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure or pain;
My warst word is—"Welcome, and welcome again!"

If you do not relish the air, I will send it to Johnson. R. B.

[Pastoral verse exhibits many examples of the dramatic mode of composition: compliments and scorn, praise and censure, are bandied about by shepherds and shepherdesses, till the subject-matter is exhausted. In like manner, Willy and Philly, in the first of these lyrics, carry on the pleasant strife of compliment, till flowery comparisons grow scant, and the lovers are reduced to silence. Phillis is a favourite in northern song; in the present instance it is the true name of the heroine, Miss Phillis M'Murdo, of Dumlanrig.]

[One of the happiest examples of free wit and humour may be found in the "Auld Gudeman:"—

HE.

"The auld gudeman that thou tells of,
The country kens where he was born,
Was but a silly poor vagabond,
And ilka ane leugh him to scorn;
For he did spend and make an end
Of gear that his forefathers wan;
He gart the poor stand frae the door,—
Sae tell nae mair o' the auld gudeman.

SHE.

My heart alake is liken to break,
When I think on my winsome John;
His blinkan e'e and gate sae free,
Was naething like thee, thou dosen'd drone.
His rosie cheek and flaxen hair,
And a skin as white as onie swan,
Was large and tall and comely withal,
And thou'lt never be like my auld gudeman."

Tradition has recorded that Burns wrote "Contented wi' little" in a moment of hope, when fortune seemed inclined to pause in her persecution, and the frozen finger of the Excise pointed to the situation of supervisor. Yet hope did not hinder him from thinking of independence, even while keeping sorrow and care at bay with a cup and song: he forgot not that his freedom was a 'lairdship nae monarch dare touch.' Of songs which honour fire-side happiness and domestic felicity we have but few, compared with those which treat of love and wine; yet of these, some are truly excellent: and, among the latter, who can refuse to include

"Contented wi' little and cantie wi' mair!"
CUNNINGHAM.]

No. LXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

SINCE yesterday's penmanship, I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to "Roy's Wife." You will allow me that, in this instance, my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish:—

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?

Tune—*Roy's Wife.*

I.

Is this thy plighted, fond regard,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katy?
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
An aching, broken heart, my Katy?

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

II.

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katy!
Thou may'st find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy!

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another to be the best friends on earth) that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have at last gotten one; but it is a very rude instrument: it is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton-ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh bone; and lastly, an oaten reed, exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have, when the corn-stems are green and full-grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back-ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds were wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little of it. If Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine; as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Pride in poets is nae sin," and, I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.*

[To the Song "Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?" written in the character of a forsaken lover, a reply was found on the part of the lady, among the MSS. of Burns, evidently

* [This is an interesting and minute account of an ancient instrument of music, well known to the peasantry of Scotland. In the Complaynt of Scotland, written in 1548, the author draws this graphic picture of the manners of our pastoral ancestors. "I rais and returnit to the fresche fieldis that I cam fra, quhar I beheld mony hudit hirdis blawand ther buc hornis and ther corne pipis, calland and convoyand mony fat floc to be fed on the fieldis. Than the scheiphirdis pat ther scheip on bankis and brais and on dry hillis, to get ther pastour. Than I beheld the scheiphirdis wyvis and ther childer that brocht there morning bracfast to the scheiphirdis. Than the scheiphirdis wyvis cutt it rachis and seggis and gardit mony fragrant grene meduart, with the quhilkis tha covurit the end of a leye rig, and syne sat doune altogyddir to tak there refectione, quhar thai maid grit cheir of evyrie sort of mylk, baitht of ky mylk, and zoue mylk, sueit mylk, and sour milk, curdis and quhaye, sourkittis, fresche buttir, and salt buttir, reyme, flot quhaye, grene cheis, kyrn mylk. Evyrie scheiphird hed an horne spune in the lug of there bonet: thai had na breyd, but ry caikis and fustean skonnis maid of flour. Than eftir there disjune, thai began to talk of grit myrrynes that was rycht plesand to be hard."

The things "rycht plesand to be hard," consisted of "gude tailis and fabillis," and "sueit melodious sangis of natural music of the antiquete," after enumerating which our author goes on to tell the different musical instruments wherewith the shepherds enlivened the dance. "Than eftir this sueit celest armonye, thai began to dance in ane ring; evyrie ald scheiphird led his wyfe be the hand, and evyrie zong scheiphird led hyr quhome he luffit best. There was viij scheiphirdis, and ilk ane of them hed ane syndry instrument to play to the laif. The first hed ane drone bag pipe, the nyxt hed ane pipe maid of ane bleddir and of ane reid, the third playit on ane trump, the feyrd on ane corne pipe, the fyft playit on ane pipe maid of ain gait horne, the sext playit on ane recordar, the sevint plait on ane fiddil, and the last plait on ane quhissil."

The late Dr. Leyden, who edited the curious work from which the above extracts are given, has enriched his edition with a learned and valuable dissertation, from which we take the following passages, as illustrative of the subject in question, for he has exhausted all that can be said about it.

"The 'pipe maid of ane gait horne,' is the stock and horn, or 'buck horne' of the Scottish peasantry, formed by inserting a reed, or pipe, into a horn, which gives a full and mellow expression to the sound. The reed or whistle was often formed of the excavated elder branch, to which practice there is an allusion in Cockelby's Sow, where 'the pype maid of a bourit bourtre,' is mentioned as the appropriate musical instrument of the 'nolt hirdis.' The 'stoc-horn,' mentioned in the same poem, is merely a species of bugle, or open cow's horn, used for giving an alarm, like the Irish stuic or stoc, a brazen tube formed like the horn of a cow, and employed as a speaking trumpet. The pib-corn, used in some districts of Wales, seems to be only an improved species of the stock and horn, from which it differs, in having both extremities of the pipe or whistle inserted in a horn. The Welch, according to Higden, employed these 'hornes of gheet,' as he terms them, at their funerals. The stock and horn may likewise be considered as synonymous with the 'chalemaulx de Cornouaille' in the Romaunt of the Rose, rendered by Chaucer, 'horn pipes of Cornewaile.' In Merciai's 'Les Vigiles de la mort du Roi Charles Septiesme,' the Horn pipe is likewise mentioned as a favourite pastoral instrument.

"There can be no doubt but this instrument is the 'liltyng horn' of Chaucer, such

'As haue these little heerde gromes,
That kepen beastes in the bromes.'

"The stock and horn was so formed that the parts could be easily separated, while the horn might be employed as a bugle, and the pipe, as a simple pipe or whistle. The stock horn, in the strict sense, is the cornet, or crumhorn of the Germans, the shalmey, or chalumeau, used with the trumpet at tilts and tournaments. Thus,

'Trumpettis and schalmis with a schout
Played or the rink began.'

"The shalmele is enumerated by Gower among the instruments of music in the court of Venus.

'In suche accorde and such a sowne
Of bumbarde and of clariowne,
With cornemuse and shalmele,
That it was halfe a mannes hele
So glad a noise for to here.—'

"It is curious that the pipe is excluded from 'the companie of Eldie,' in the court of Venus.

'But yet I herde no pipes there
To make mirthe in mannes ere;
But the musike I might knowe
For olde men which sowned lowe,
With harpe and lute and the citole;
The houe dance and the carole,
In such a wise as loue hath bede,
A softe paas thei daunce and trede.'

in a female hand-writing. The temptation to give it to the public is irresistible; and if, in so doing, offence should be given to the fair authoress, the beauty of her verses must plead our excuse:—

Tune—*Roy's Wife.*

TELL me that thou yet art true,
And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven,
And when this heart proves fause to thee,
Yon sun shall cease its course in heaven.

Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
For, ah! thou know'st na' every pang
Wad wring my bosom, shouldst thou leave me.

But to think I was betray'd,
That falsehood e'er our loves should sunder!
To take the flow'ret to my breast,
And find the guilefu' serpent under.

Could I hope thou'dst ne'er deceive,
Celestial pleasures, might I choose 'em,
I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
That heaven I'd find within thy bosom.

Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
For, ah! thou know'st na' every pang
Wad wring my bosom, shouldst thou leave me.]

[" It may amuse the reader to be told that, on this occasion, the gentleman and the lady have exchanged the dialects of their respective countries. The Scottish Bard makes his address in pure English: the reply on the part of the lady in the Scottish dialect is, if we mistake not, by a young and beautiful Englishwoman." — CURRIE.]

[This reply was written by a young and beautiful Englishwoman—Mrs. Riddel. She alludes to her quarrel with the Poet: she took a flower to her bosom, and found a serpent under. In that metaphorical way she intimated that the Poet had the presumption to attempt to salute her—a piece of forwardness which a coldness of two years' continuance more than punished.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. LXVII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

29th November, 1794.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable, correspondent I ever met with. To attempt flattering you never entered my head; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my impudence, in so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have, all along, condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy that it ceases to be wonderful if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise: all the songs are charming, but the duet is a *chef d'œuvre*. "Lumps of pudding" shall certainly make one of my family dishes: you have cooked it so capitally that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast, when you find yourself in good spirits; these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind, of which we have great choice. Besides, one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to every body. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown: it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, "The Soldier's Return," to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me, when she recognizes her ain dear Willy, "She gaz'd, she reddened like a rose." The three lines immediately following are, no doubt, more impressive on the reader's feelings; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting in the soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliment you pay him, in considering him worthy of standing in a niche, by the side of Burns, in the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capable of any thing but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says, he remembers to have heard one in his younger days (made of wood instead of your bone), and that the sound was abominable.*

Do not, I beseech you, return any books.

G. T.

No. LXVIII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

December, 1794.

IT is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do any thing to forward, or add to the value of,

* The query put by Thomson is sufficiently answered by the lengthened note to the preceding letter, the value of which will be duly appreciated by every one curious in the history of Scottish music.—MOTHERWELL.

your book; and, as I agree with you that the Jacobite song in the Museum, to "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes home" would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love-song to that air, I have just framed for you the following:—

My Nannie's awa.

Tune—*There'll never be Peace, &c.*

I.

Now in her green mantle blithe* nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While† birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless—my Nannie's awa!

II.

The snaw-drap & primrose our woodlands adorn,‡
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad § bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nannie's awa!

III.

Thou lav'rock that springs frae the dews of the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hails the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nannie's awa!

IV.

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow and grey,‖
And soothe me with tidings o' nature's decay:
The dark dreary winter, and wild driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie's awa!

How does this please you?—As to the point of time for the expression, in your proposed print from my "Sodger's Return," it must certainly be at—"She gaz'd." The interesting dubity and suspense taking possession of her countenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of roguish playfulness in his, strike me as things of which a master will make a great deal.—In great haste, but in great truth, yours.

R. B.

[Clarinda was the Nannie whose absence Burns laments in this pretty pastoral. His thoughts were often in Edinburgh. On festive occasions, when toasts were called for, Syme used to exclaim, "Come, we all know what Burns will give—here's Mrs. Mac." The lave-ock was a favourite bird with him; and many happy images it has supplied him with. It is, indeed, pleasant both to eye and ear to be out by grey daylight on a summer morning, when a thousand larks are ascending into the brightening air; the warblings of some are near, and the songsters may be seen mounting as they sing: others are unseen in the cloud, and the whole atmosphere is full of melody.]

* VAR.—Gay. † VAR.—And.—CUNNINGHAM.
‡ The primrose and daisy our glens may adorn.

No. LXIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

January, 1795.

I FEAR for my songs; however, a few may please, yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we poetic folks have been describing the spring, for instance; and, as the spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c., of these said rhyming folks.

A great critic (Aikin) on songs says that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts, inverted into rhyme:—

Is there, for honest Poverty.

Tune—*For a' that, and a' that.*

I.

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toil's obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that!

II.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man, for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that!

III.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd—a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind
He looks and laughs at a' that!

IV.

A king can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!

§ VAR.—Torture my.
‖ Array.—Poet's MS.

For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

V.

Then let us pray that come it may—
As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that! *

I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*; for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for "Craigie-burn Wood?"—

Craigie-burn Wood.†

I.

SWEET fa's the eve on Craigie-burn,
And blithe awakes the morrow;
But a' the pride o' spring's return
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

II.

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But what a weary wight can please,
And care his bosom wringing?

III.

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet dare na for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

IV.

If thou refuse to pity me,
If thou shalt love anither,
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
Around my grave they'll wither.

Farewell! God bless you.

R. B.

No. LXX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 30th January, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR.

I THANK you heartily for "Nannie's awa," as well as for "Craigie-burn," which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficulty of original writing in a number of efforts, in the same style, strikes me very forcibly; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty, in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, "For a' that," shall undoubtedly be included in my list.

G. T.

* ["In his noble song, 'A man's a man for a' that,' the Poet has vindicated the natural and unalienable rights of his species: he has distinguished between our social condition as contemplated by God, and that artificial state brought about by the perverse ingenuity of man. In resorting to first principles, he is compelled to speak with contempt of hereditary rank, and treat it as a manifest usurpation. That genius and enterprise should raise themselves in society seem as natural as for the sun to shine; but that they will continue in the family-line, from generation to generation, no person but a prince expects. God made genius personal, not hereditary; he gave the wisdom to Solomon which he refused to Rehoboham; and even in our own country, noble houses may be pointed out of which nothing remains noble save the name. Burns could not but feel that wealth, not talent, is the way to titles: the most glorious persons in British story went to the dust with plain 'master' on their coffin-lids—Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Locke. There should be rank and honours for all those who greatly distinguish themselses in literature and arts, as well as in arms. He who would truly contemptate the history of a country should consider that its greatness arises from the union of many qualities; Watt deserves a place as well as Wellington; nor are the achievements of Scott to be forgotten in the account of battles by sea and shore. Titles should flow from the fountain of honour readily and unsolicited to all who are illustrious; instead of which they flow almost solely to the wealthy. Those who have amassed fortunes by all manner of speculation, and have become swollen and big, like striped pumpkins flourishing on heaps of dung, are sure to have the sword lain on their shoulders, or their brows enclosed in coronets. There is nothing left for genius but to join in the song of Burns,—

'Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
Can bear the gree, and a' that.'

"In this sentiment men of talent should join more earnestly, since it has been publicly declared that genius is so supremely blest as not at all to require other distinction—a doctrine which decrees to dulness the star and the garter—

'Amen—and virtue is its own reward.'"
CUNNINGHAM.]

† [This sweet little song savours much of the secret love displayed in the following old verses:—

WHEN ye come to yon town end,
Fu' mony a lass ye'll see;
Dinna, dinna, look at them,
For fear ye mindna me.

Dinna ask me gin I luve thee?
Deed I darena tell;
Dinna ask me gin I luve thee?
Ask it o' yoursell.

O dinna look at me sae aft,
Sae weel as ye may trow;
For when ye look at me sae aft,
I canna look at you.

Dinna ask me, &c.

Little ken ye but mony ane,
Will say they fancy thee;
But only keep your mind to them
That fancies nane but thee.

Dinna ask me gin I luve thee,—
Deed I darena tell;
Dinna ask me gin I luve thee,—
Ask it o' yoursell. B.

Craigie-burn Wood is situated on the banks of the river Moffat, and about three miles distant from the village of that name, celebrated for its medicinal waters. The woods of Craigie-burn and of Duncrief were at one time favourite haunts of our poet. It was there he met the "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," and that he conceived several of his beautiful lyrics.—CURRIE.]

[In these cold words, "Your *vive la bagatelle* song, 'For a' that,' shall undoubtedly be included in my list," Thomson accepts the present of a song which will live while the language lasts.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. LXXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

February, 1795.

HERE is another trial at your favourite air:—

Tune—*Let me in this ae Night.*

I.

O LASSIE, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou waking, I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.

O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo!

II.

Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet:
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.

III.

The bitter blast that round me blaws,
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's:
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.

O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo!

HER ANSWER.

I.

O tell na me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain!
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
I winna let ye in, jo.

I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo,

II.

The snellest blast, at mirkest hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
Is nocht to what poor she endures,
That's trusted faithless man, jo.

III.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed;
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weird may be her ain, jo.

IV.

The bird that charm'd his summer-day
Is now the cruel fowler's prey;
Let witless, trusting woman say
How aft her fate's the same, jo.

I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo!

I do not know whether it will do. R. B.

[If Burns drew his song of "A man's a man for a' that" solely from his own mind and fancy, there is no question that he is indebted to an old strain for the idea of these twin lyrics. He has changed the lead into gold, and dismissed a deal of dross: still the sentiment belongs to the olden times. These are part of the old words:—

"O lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
Or are you waking, I wad wit?
For love has bound me hand and fit,
And I wad fain be in, jo.

O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
O let me in this ae night,
Or I'll ne'er come back again, jo.

The night it is baith cauld and weet,
The morn it will be snaw and sleet;
My shoon are freezing to my feet,
Wi' standing here alane, jo.

I am the laird o' Windy wa's,
I come na here without a cause;
And I hae gotten mony fa's,
Wad killed a thousand men, jo.—"

"My father's waukrife in his sleep,
My mither the cha'mer keys does keep,
And a' the doors sae chirp and cheep,
I daurna let you in, jo.

Sae gae ye're ways this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
O gae ye're ways this ae night,
I daurna let ye in, jo."

"But I'll come stealing saftly in,
And cannily mak little din;
And then the gate to you I'll find,
If you'll direct me in, jo.

O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
O let me in this ae night,
Or I'll ne'er come back again, jo."

It is said that the thoughts of Burns wandered to Woodlee-Park, and his feud with Mrs. Riddel, when he composed these songs. The lady in the old verses resisted nothing like so stoutly or successfully as the modern heroine is made to do.]

No. LXXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Ecclefechan, 7th February, 1795.

MY DEAR THOMSON:

YOU cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write to you. In the course of my duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late), I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked, little village.* I have gone forward, but snows, of ten feet deep, have impeded my progress: I have tried to "gae back the gate I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, on that very account, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them: like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk, at your service!†

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time then to tell you all I wanted to say; and, Heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—"We'll gang nae mair to yon town?" I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye, to whom I would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night. R. B.

* ["Ecclefechan is a little thriving village in Annandale: nor is it more known for its hiring fairs than for beautiful lasses and active young men. The latter, when cudgel-playing was regularly taught to the youth of the Scottish lowlands, distinguished themselves by skill and courage; they did not, however, enjoy their fame without contention: they had frequent feuds with the lads of Lockerby, and their laurels were put in jeopardy. On an old New Year's-day, some thirty years ago, Ecclefechan sent some two hundred 'sticks' against Lockerby: they drew themselves up beside an old fortalice, and intimated their intention of keeping their post till the sun went down:—they bit their thumbs, flourished their oak saplings, and said, 'We wad like to see wha wad hinder us.' This was a matter of joy to the lads of Lockerby: an engagement immediately took place, and Ecclefechan seemed likely to triumph, when a douce elder of the kirk, seizing a stick from one who seemed unskilful in using it, rushed forward, broke the enemy's ranks, pushed the lads of Ecclefechan rudely out of the place, and exclaimed, 'That's the way we did lang syne!' The Poet paid Ecclefechan many a visit, friendly and official, and even wrought its almost unpronounceable name into a couple of songs."—CUNNINGHAM.]

† ["The Bard must have been tipsy indeed, to abuse sweet Ecclefechan at this rate."—CURRIE.]

‡ [The tune to which this address was written, "Where will bonnie Annie lie?" is sweet; and happily allied to words simple and unaffected, particularly if we were to take into account the exalted personages who formed the hero and heroine of the song—viz. James, fifth duke, and Ann, duchess of Hamilton. It was written by Allan Ramsay on the eve of their marriage. The following are the first two stanzas:—

HE.

"Where wad bonny Annie lie?
Alane nae mair ye maun lie;
Wad ye a goodman try?
Is that the thing ye'ere laking?

SHE.

Can a lass sae young as I
Venture on the bridal tie,
Syne down with a goodman lie?
I'm fleed he'd keep me wauking."

A later version of the song runs as follows:—

Where will bonnie Annie lie?
Where will bonnie Annie lie?
Where will bonnie Annie lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

Where but in her true love's bed;
Arms of love around her spread;
Pillow'd on his breast her head,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

There will bonnie Annie lie,
There will bonnie Annie lie,
There will bonnie Annie lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!

No. LXIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

25th February, 1795.

I HAVE to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles, one containing "Let me in this ae night;" and the other from Ecclefechan, proving that, drunk or sober, your "mind is never muddy." You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song, as it now stands, very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan, and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song-making. It will give me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for "O wat ye wha's in yon town."

G. T.

No. LXXIV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May, 1795.

Address to the Wood-lark.‡

Tune—*Where'll bonnie Ann lie.*
Or, *Loch-Eroch side.*

I.

O STAY, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing, fond complaining.

II.
Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

III.
Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd
Sic notes o' wo could wauken.

IV.
Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief and dark despair:
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

Let me know, your very first leisure, how you like this song.

On Chloris being ill.

Tune—*Ay wakin' O.*

I.
CAN I cease to care?
Can I cease to languish?
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

II.
Every hope is fled,
Every fear is terror:
Slumber even I dread,
Every dream is horror.

III.
Hear me, Pow'rs divine!
Oh, in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
But my Chloris spare me!

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.*

How do you like the foregoing?—The Irish air, "Humours of Glen," is a great favourite of mine, and as, except the silly stuff in the "Poor soldier," there are not any decent verses for it, I have written for it as follows:—

Caledonia.

Tune—*Humours of Glen.*

I.
THEIR groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt their perfume;
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom:
Far dearer to me are yon† humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan ‡ lurk lowly unseen;
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A-listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

II.
Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay sunny valleys,
And cauld CALEDONIA'S blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they?—The haunt o' the tyrant and slave!
The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save love's willing fetters, the chains o' his Jean.§

When the storm is raging high,
Calm she'll list it whistling bye!
While cozie in his arms she'll lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O.
Where will bonnie Annie lie?
Where will bonnie Annie lie?
Where will bonnie Annie lie,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O?
In the arms of wedded love,
Breathing thanks to Him above,
Whose care and goodness she does prove,
I' the cauld nights o' winter, O!]

* [The song on the "Illness of Chloris," is one of the Poet's brief and happy things: it is modelled on an old lyric, still popular in some parts of the north, and justly so:—

"Ay waking, oh,
Waking ay, and weary,
Sleep I canna get,
For thinking on my dearie.
I have fallen in love
Wi' a' the world's darling,
An' canna see the sun
For bonnie May Macfarlane."]

† [VAR.—These. ‡ VAR.—Blue-bells and gowans.]

§ ["The exquisite song of 'Caledonia' unites domestic affection with love of country, and is exceedingly popular. The heroine was Mrs. Burns, who so charmed the Poet by singing it with taste and feeling that he declared it to be one of his luckiest lyrics. She sang with ease and simplicity; science adorned without injuring nature: and her 'wood note wild' was said to be almost unequalled.

"The original MS. of this song, with which the text has been collated, is thus marked:—'To Provost Whigham, this first copy of the song: from the author.'

"It is remark-worthy that the song in honour of his wife was accompanied by two in honour of his friend. For the beautiful song which follows in the text, ''Twas na her bonnie blue e'e was my ruin,' we are indebted to Jean Lorimer. It is true that 'Mary' is wrought into the texture of the verse: but copies have been seen with the first line of the last verse running thus:—

'Jeanie, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest.'

It has already been intimated that this Nithsdale beauty was a sort of lay-figure, on which the muse hung her garlands."
—CUNNINGHAM.]

'Twas na her bonnie blue E'e.

Tune—*Laddie lie near me.*

I.

'Twas na her bonnie blue e'e was my ruin;
Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoing:
'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,
'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stown glance o' kindness.

II.

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me!
But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

III.

Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest!
And thou'rt the angel that never can alter—
Sooner the sun in his motion would falter.

Let me hear from you. R. B.

No. LXXV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

You must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my gift, when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of the Cotter's Saturday Night is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The figure intended for your portrait I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember your phiz. This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs. Burns finds you out among the figures.

I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic "Address to the Wood-lark," your elegant Panegyric on "Caledonia," and your affecting verses on "Chloris's illness." Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song, to "Laddie, lie near me," though not equal to these, is very pleasing.

No. LXXVI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

How cruel are the Parents!*

Tune—*John Anderson, my Jo.*

I.

How cruel are the parents
Who riches only prize,
And, to the wealthy booby,
Poor woman sacrifice!
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife;—
To shun a tyrant father's hate,
Become a wretched wife.

II.

The rav'ning hawk pursuing,
The trembling dove thus flies,
To shun impelling ruin
Awhile her pinion tries;
Till of escape despairing,
No shelter or retreat,
She trusts the ruthless falconer,
And drops beneath his feet!

Mark yonder Pomp.

Tune *Deil tak the Wars.*

I.

Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion,
Round the wealthy, titled bride:
But when compar'd with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.
What are the showy treasures?
What are the noisy pleasures?
The gay gaudy glare of vanity and art:
The polish'd jewel's blaze
May draw the wond'ring gaze,
And courtly grandeur bright
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart.†

II.

But, did you see my dearest Chloris
In simplicity's array;

* [This song is altered from an old English one: it preaches a sermon on matrimonial alliances, which all believe and no one obeys; parents still use undue influence with their children, and, while securing a fleeting splendour, are heedless of entailing a lasting wretchedness.]

* [The idea of the first stanza of this song appears to have been borrowed from the old love verses that follow:—

"Love's a gentle gen'rous passion!
Source of all sublime delight;
When, with mutual inclination,
Two fond hearts in one unite.

What are titles, pomp, or riches,
If compar'd with true content?
That false joy which now bewitches,
When too late, we may repent."]

Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day?
O then, the heart alarming,
And all resistless charming,
In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown,
Even Avarice would deny
His worshipp'd deity,
And feel thro' ev'ry vein Love's raptures roll.

Well! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders: your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just now in a high fit for poetizing, provided that the strait-jacket of criticism don't cure me. If you can in a post or two administer a little of the intoxicating potion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's phrenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment "holding high converse" with the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

R. B.

No. LXXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

May, 1795.

Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present; though I am ashamed of the value of it, being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shewn it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it as a first-rate production. My phiz is sae kenspeckle that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once. My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, d—n'd, wee, rumble-gairie urchin of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicol; after a certain friend of mine who is one of the masters of a grammar school in a city which shall be nameless.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued friend Cunningham, and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me in a manner introduced me—I mean a well-known military and literary character, Colonel Dirom.

You do not tell me how you liked my two last songs. Are they condemned?

R. B.

["The picture alluded to was painted from the "Cotter's Saturday Night:" it displays at once the talent and want of taste of the ingenious artist. The scene is a solemn one: but the serenity of the moment is disturbed by what some esteem as a beauty, namely, the attempt to cut the top of the cat's tail, by the little merry urchin, seated on the floor. The unity of the sentiment is destroyed: it jars with the harmony of the rest of the picture as much as a snail does in crawling in the bosom of a new opened rose. This sense of propriety is required in such compositions: Burns was a great master in it: he introduced true love, domestic gladness, and love of country along with devotion in his noble poem of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," but he never dreamed of throwing in any of his ludicrous or humorous touches—all is as much in keeping as in the best conceived picture."—Cunningham.]

Yet Burns seems to have enjoyed the humorous touch of the Painter exceedingly, and I question whether he, for one moment, thought it out of "keeping."—J. C.

No. LXXVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

13*th May*, 1795.

It gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr. Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so very early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again, by speaking of obligation.

I like your two last songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetizing. Long may it last! Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of "William and Margaret," and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect.

G. T.

No. LXXIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

In "Whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad," the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes what I think is an improvement:—

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Tho' father, and mother, and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeanny will venture wi' ye, my lad.
[See LETTER XXXV.]

In fact, a fair dame, at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning; a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment, and dispute her commands if you dare!

This is no my ain Lassie.*

Tune—*This is no my ain House.*

I.

I SEE a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place;
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.

O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho'the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

II.

She's bonnie, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And aye it charms my very saul,
The kind love that's in her e'e.

III.

A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen;
But gleg as light are lovers' een,
When kind love is in the e'e.

IV.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her e'e.

O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.†

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The enclosed sheet contains two songs for him, which please to present to my valued friend, Cunningham.

I enclose the sheet open, both for your inspection, and that you may copy the song "O bonnie was yon rosy brier." I do not know whether I am right; but that song pleases me, and, as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly-roused celestial spark will be soon smothered in the fogs of indolence, if you like the song, it may go as Scottish verses to the air of "I wish my love was in a mire;" and poor Erskine's English lines may follow.

I enclose you, a "For a' that and a' that," which was never in print: it is a much superior song to mine. I have been told that it was composed by a lady.—

R. B.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Now Spring has clad the Grove in green.

A SCOTTISH SONG.

I.

Now spring has clad the grove in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers:
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe?

II.

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art:
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

III.

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,

* [There is an old song to this tune in Ramsay's Miscellany, beginning:—

"This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the rigging o't;
Since with my love I've changed vows,
I dinna like the bigging o't."]

† [This is one of the happiest of the Poet's productions. He was acquainted with all the mysteries of love-making, and familiar with all the romance of trystings in lonely places, and meetings at forbidden hours, when age and circumspection were asleep. What can be finer or truer than these lines:—

"A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink by a' unseen,
But gleg as light are lovers' e'en,
When kind love is in the e'e."]

And now beneath the with'ring blast
My youth and joy consume.

IV.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blithe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reckt I sorrow's power,
Until the flow'ry snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

V.

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whase doom is, "hope nae mair,"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whase bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.*

O Bonny was yon Rosy Brier.

I.

O BONNY was yon rosy brier,
That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man;
And bonnie she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

II.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure amang the leaves sae green;
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

III.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

IV.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
Its joys and griefs alike resign.

Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the last edition of my poems, presented to the lady whom, in so many fictitious reveries of passion, but with the most ardent sentiments of real friendship, I have so often sung under the name of Chloris:—

To Chloris.

'TIS Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms,)
To join the friendly few.

Since thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lour;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower.)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store—
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow
On conscious honour's part;
And—dearest gift of heaven below—
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every Muse to rove:
And doubly were the poet blest
These joys could he improve.

Une bagatelle de l'amitie.—COILA.

No. LXXX.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Edinburgh, 3rd August, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

THIS will be delivered to you by a Dr. Brianton, who has read your works, and pants for the honour of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman; but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptation.

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours! it is superfluous to tell you that I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter "O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad," to the prosaic line, "Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad." I must be permitted to say that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so

---

* [This song has some beautiful imagery; he prescribed it as a sort of poetic medicine for the heart of his friend Alexander Cunningham, which had suffered from the bright eyes and scornful tongue of an Edinburgh dame. It is no easy matter for a poet to load himself with another man's woes, and sing them with a natural and deep emotion.—For some interesting particulars respecting this lady, see note at the end of this Correspondence, page 517.

well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would, in my name, petition the charming Jeanie, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.

I should be happy to see Mr. Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses.—Every body regrets his writing so very little, as every body acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray was the resolution formed coolly before dinner, or was it a midnight vow, made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr. Cunningham what you have sent him.

P. S.—The lady's "For a' that, and a' that," is sensible enough, but no more to be compared to yours than I to Hercules.

G. T.

[Currie says that he has heard the heroine of

"Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,"

sing it in the very spirit of arch simplicity that it required, and the line,

"Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad,"

came gracefully from her lips. He therefore thinks Mr. Thomson's petition unreasonable. "There is no doubt that Currie alludes to Mrs. Riddel; but the heroine was one of a lower degree than her of Woodlee-Park, nor had she any talent for verse nor perhaps taste in poetry. But she was aware of the light which the genius of Burns shed on all to whom he was partial: and, moreover, it gave her a sort of distinction or pre-eminence among the rustic damsels of the vale."—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. LXXXI.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Forlorn my Love, no Comfort near.*

Tune—*Let me in this ae Night.*

I.

FORLORN, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I most repine, love.

O wert thou, love, but near me;
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love!

II.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I,
Save in those arms of thine, love.

III.

Cold, alter'd friendship's cruel part,
To poison fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.

IV.

But dreary tho' the moments fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.

O wert thou, love, but near me;
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour: so much for the speed of my Pegasus; but what say you to his bottom?

R. B.

No. LXXXII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Last May a braw Wooer.

Tune—*The Lothian Lassie.*

I.

LAST May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe, believe me,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me!

---

* ["The complaint of a lover of the coldness or the absence of his mistress is a favourite theme with lyric poets. But the bards of the olden and the bards of these our latter times sung with a difference. Modern minstrels keep a poor lover enduring the rain or the snow of a stormy night, while his inexorable mistress looks out at her window as cold as the northern star, and reproaches him with evil intentions and reprehensible thoughts. The eldern minstrels did not make their ladies of icicles; a little maidenly bashfulness was exhibited, but at last pity influenced the dame; the doors were opened softly; green rushes were strewed on the floor and stair, to hinder the lover's steps to be heard; and he was conducted—past, perhaps, a mother's bed-side—or, more perilous still, a maiden aunt's—to a secret chamber, into which we shall not attempt to force our way. An old song, to the same air to which this song is written, gives a rude picture of such interviews:—

'O I'll come stealing saftly in,
And cannilie make little din;
To keep me here wad be a sin,
Amang the wintry rain, jo.

Cast off the shoon frae aff yere feet,
Cast back the door unto the weet;
Syne to my chamber craftily creep,
But ne'er come back again, jo.

O in he crept so cannilie,
O in he staw sae privilie;
Nane save my sel' could hear or see—
Then he was a' my ain, jo.'

We cannot follow the old poet farther."—CUNNINGHAM.]

II.

He spak o' the darts in my bonnie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked, for Jean,
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying!

III.

A weel-stocked mailen—himsel' for the laird—
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

IV.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less—
The deil tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess,*
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

V.

But a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there!
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

VI.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Lest neebors might say I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

VII.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin',
And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't feet,
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin', a swearin',
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin'!

VIII.

He begged, for Gudesake, I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
Sae, e'en to preserve the poor body his life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.†

---

* [In the original copy of this song sent to Thomson, this line runs thus:—

"He up the Gateslack to my black cousin Bess."

To Gateslack, as well as to Dalgarnock in the next verse, Thomson objected; they were not sufficiently soft and suitable for the voice. To which Burns replied, "Gateslack is the name of a particular place—a kind of passage up among the Lowther hills on the confines of this country. Dalgarnock is also the name of a romantic spot near the Nith, where are still a ruined church and a burial ground. However, let the first line run

'He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess.'"

"It is always a pity," says Currie, "to throw out anything that gives locality to our Poet's verses." In this case, to have expelled Dalgarnock would have been an injury. It is the very place where Old Mortality is represented by Scott repairing cherubs' heads and defaced inscriptions on the grave-stones of the Cameronian worthies. It is one of the loveliest spots too on Nithside. The kirk and kirk-yard belonged to the old parish of Dalgarnock when it was incorporated with Closeburn; the affections of the people linger about the spot where their fathers' ashes lie, and it is still used as place of interment.]

† The reader will observe the nature of the alterations which Burns thought this song required, by comparing the first version communicated to the Museum, with that sent to Thomson:—

Air.—*The Lothian Lassie.*

Ae day a braw wooer came down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
But I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi' him to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi' him to believe me.

A weel stocket mailen, himself o't the laird,
An' bridal aff hand was the proffer;
I never loot on that I kenn'd or I car'd,
But I thought I might get a waur offer, waur offer,
But I thought I might get a waur offer,

He spake o' the darts o' my bonnie black een,
And O for my love he was dien';
But I said he might die when he likit for Jean,
The Gude forgie' me for lien', for lien',
The Gude forgie'.me for lien'.

But what do ye think! in a fortnight or less—
The deil's in his taste to gae near her!
He's down to the castle to black cousin Bess,
Think how, the jade! I could endure her, endure her,
Think how, the jade! I could endure her.

An' a' the niest week, as I fretted wi' care,
I gade to the tryste o' Dalgarlock,
And wha but my braw fickle wooer was there,
Wha glower'd as if he'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
Wha glower'd as if he'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gied him a blink,
Lest neighbours should think I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd that I was a dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd that I was a dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fou couthie an' sweet,
An' if she'd recover'd her hearin',
An' how my auld shoon suited her shauchled feet,
Gude safe us! how he fell a swearin', a swearin'
Gude safe us! how he fell a swearin'!

He begged me for Gudesake that I'd be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
And, just to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I will wed him to morrow, to-morrow,
I think I will wed him to-morrow.

["This is, in some respects, a better version of the song than the copy sent to Thomson. The third line in the seventh verse of the latter is altogether wrong, and cannot surely be as Burns wrote it. It is nonsense to ask

'And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't feet?'

The satiric allusion is preserved in Johnson's version;—

'And how my auld shoon suited her shauchled feet.'

'Auld shoon,' in the language of rustic wooing, represent a discarded lover. Thus, in the old song,—

'Ye may tell the coof that gets her
That he gets but my auld shoon.'

It was this—and well it might—which made the wooer fall 'a swearin';'—the transposition too of the verses lets us a little into the character of the lady; she puts that sarcastic question after bestowing the blink 'owre her left shouther:'—she was desirous of showing her lover that the conquest was not quite achieved."—Cunningham.]

Fragment.—Chloris.

Tune—*Caledonian Hunt's Delight.*

I.

Why, why tell thy lover,
Bliss he never must enjoy?
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie?

II.

O why, while fancy, raptur'd, slumbers,
Chloris, Chloris all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream?

Such is the peculiarity of the rhythm of this air that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the tooth-ache, so have not a word to spare.

R. B.

No. LXXXIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

3rd June, 1795.

My dear Sir:

Your English verses to "Let me in this ae night," are tender and beautiful; and your ballad to the "Lothian Lassie" is a masterpiece for its humour and naïveté. The fragment of the "Caledonian Hunt" is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and, as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had Bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the Poet; but, nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord, make us thankful!

G. T.

[It was not without reason that Thomson wrote in this gentle and conciliatory strain: the Poet was suffering from ill health and depressed fortune, and that slow consuming illness which arrested him in his bright career was more than beginning to manifest itself.]

No. LXXXIV.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

5th Feb. 1796.

O Robby Burns, are ye sleeping yet?
Or are ye wauking, I would wit?

The pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful! Am I never to hear from you again? I know and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late, but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish "married to immortal verse." We have several true-born Irishmen on the Scottish list; but they are now naturalized and reckoned our own good subjects: indeed, we have none better. I believe I before told you that I had been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favourite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan: what is your opinion of this?*

G. T.

No. LXXXV.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

February 17, 1796.

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. Burns, and for my remaining volume of Peter Pindar.—Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo, with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have, already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much:—

Hey for a Lass wi' a Tocher.

Tune—*Balinamona Ora.*

I.

Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms:

* ["Burns had made a pause in his correspondence from June, 1795, to February, 1796; and Thomson, feeling alarm, as much for the Poet's sake as for the 'dozen of Scotch and Irish airs' which he wished 'wedded to immortal verse,' wrote to make inquiries. Something in the tone of the letter, and the circumstance of pressing a sick man to write songs, seem to indicate that Thomson did not imagine that Burns was in a dangerous state. Nor is this surprising:—he was wildly gay or gloomily downcast by fits and starts: Professor Walker, who had an interview with him in the latter end of the year, failed to perceive in his fierce tone of conversation, and the almost convulsive resolution to abide by the wine, the presence of that twofold sickness of mind and body which was soon to carry him to the grave. He was, nevertheless, to use the words of a Scottish song,

'Fading in his place;'

and his wearing away was observed by all who took any interest in his fortunes."—Cunningham.]

O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher;
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me.

II.

Your beauty's a flower, in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green knowes, [yowes.
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonnie white

III.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy, when possest;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest,
The langer ye hae them—the mair they're carest.

Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher;
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me.

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs, I dislike one thing; the name Chloris—I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady; but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad. Of this, and some things else, in my next: I have more amendments to propose.—What you once mentioned of "flaxen locks" is just: they cannot enter into an elegant description of beauty.—Of this also again—God bless you! *

R. B.

No. LXXXVI.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

Your "Hey for a lass wi' a tocher," is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of soft desire into an amateur of acres and guineas.

I am happy to find you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates, and I am to have my choice of them for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humour with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect, he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the Gentle Shepherd, because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind.

The Dutch boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in those etchings.

G. T.

No. LXXXVII.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

April, 1796.

Alas! my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again! "By Babel streams I have sat and wept," almost ever since I wrote you last: I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness; and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Fergusson—

"Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my howff, and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze.† I am highly delighted with

* ["Burns, it is believed, not only determined to remove Chloris with the flaxen tresses, and Anna with the golden locks, from his songs, but to eschew their allurements and avoid their company. He began, when it was too late, to perceive that, in erring against domestic ties and forsaking his household gods, he was sinning not only against his own fame, but furnishing his heart with matter for future repentance and remorse. In the complete revisal which he desired to give his songs, he had no wish to abate the humour or lessen even the occasional levities of expression in which he indulged. His aim appears to have been to change foreign names for native ones, and rely upon the Jeans, the Marys, the Phemies, the Ediths, and the Berthas of his own isle for exercising influence over the hearts of men. Whatever his resolutions were respecting his songs or himself, he lived not to fulfil them."—Cunningham.]

† ["Like the *Boar's Head* in Eastcheap, and the *Mermaid* in Friday-street, London, immortalized as these have been by the genius and wit of Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, and many other of the prime spirits of their age, so the Globe Tavern in Dumfries, the favourite haunt of our Poet, while resident in that town, appears to be destined to a similar acceptation in the eyes of posterity.

"The 'howff' of which Burns speaks was a small, comfortable tavern, situated in the mouth of the Globe close, and it held at that time the rank as third among the houses of public accommodation in Dumfries. The excellence of the drink and the attentions of the proprietor were not, however, all its attractions. 'Anna with the gowden locks' was one of the ministering damsels of the establishment; customers loved to be served by one who was not only cheerful, but whose charms were celebrated by the Bard of Kyle. On one of the last visits paid by the Poet, the wine of the 'howff' was more than commonly strong—or, served by Anna, it went more glibly over than usual; and when he rose to be gone, he found he could do no more than keep his balance. The

Mr. Allan's etchings. "Woo'd and married an' a'," is admirable; The grouping is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire, "Turnimspike." What I like least is, "Jenny said to Jocky." Besides the female being in her appearance * * * * * if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathize with him! Happy I am to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me —but that is a sad subject!

R. B.

No. LXXXVIII.

G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

4th May, 1796.

I NEED not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathise in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigour of your constitution, I trust, will soon set you on your feet again; and then, it is to be hoped, you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence and returning good spirits, I remain, with sincere regard, yours.

G. T.

P. S.—Mrs. Hyslop, I doubt not, delivered the gold seal to you in good condition.

[On this gold seal the Poet caused his coat of arms to be engraven, viz., a small bush; a bird singing; the legend "wood-notes wild," with the motto "better hae a wee bush than nae bield." This precious relic is now in the proper keeping of the Poet's brother-in-law, Robert Armour, of Old 'Change, London.]

No. LXXXIX.

BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ONCE mentioned to you an air which I have long admired, "Here's a health to them that's awa, hiney," but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it:—

Jessy.

Tune—*Here's a Health to them that's awa.*

I.

HERE'S a health to ane I lo'e dear!
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear! [meet,
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!

II.

Altho' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!

III.

I mourn through the gay, gaudy day,
As, hopeless, I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lock't in thy arms—Jessy!

IV.

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love-rolling e'e;
But why urge the tender confession,
'Gainst fortune's fell cruel decree!—Jessy!

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear!
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear! [meet,
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!

[" In the letter to Thomson," says Currie, " the first three stanzas only are given, and it was supposed that the Poet had gone no farther; among his manuscripts, however, the fourth stanza was found, which completes this exquisite song, the last finished offspring of his muse." The heroine is Jessie Lewars, now Mrs. Thomson of Dumfries: her tender attentions soothed the last days of the departing Poet; and, if immortality in song can be considered a recompence, she has been rewarded.—

night was frosty and the hour late; the Poet sat down on the steps of a door between the tavern and his own house, fell asleep, and did not awaken till he was almost dead with cold. To this exposure his illness has been imputed; and no doubt it contributed, with disappointed hope and insulted pride, to bring him to an early grave."—CUNNINGHAM.

On the panes of glass in the Globe, Burns was frequently in the habit of writing many of his witty *jeux d'esprit*, as well as fragmentary portions of his most celebrated songs. We fear these precious relics have now been wholly abstracted by the lovers and collectors of literary rarities. John Speirs, Esq., of Elderslie, has in his possession one of these panes of glass, upon which is written in Burns' autograph, the following verse of 'Sae flaxen were her ringlets,' given in Letter LVII. of this Correspondence:—

Hers are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering Beauty's sovereign law;
But still my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'!]

No. XC.
BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

THIS will be delivered by a Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you chuse, to write me by him; and if you have a spare half hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you,—and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so, when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the originals or copies.* I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout: a sad business!

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

No. XCI.
BURNS TO G. THOMSON.

Brow, on the Solway-frith, 12th July, 1796.

AFTER all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel wretch of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise, and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song-genius you have seen. I tried my hand on "Rothemurche," this morning. The measure is so difficult that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines; they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!

Fairest Maid on Devon banks.

Tune—*Rothemurche.*

I.

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou wert wont to do?
Full well thou know'st I love thee dear!
Could'st thou to malice lend an ear?
O! did not love exclaim "Forbear,
Nor use a faithful lover so."

II.

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O let me share;
And by thy beauteous self I swear
No love but thine my heart shall know.
Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do?

[" These verses," says Currie, "and the letter enclosing them, are written in a character that marks the feeble state of Burns's bodily strength. Mr. Syme is of opinion that he could not have been in any danger of a jail at Dumfries, where certainly he had many firm friends, nor under any such necessity of imploring aid from Edinburgh. But about this time (nine days before his death), his reason began at times to be unsettled, and the horrors of a jail perpetually haunted his imagination. He died on the 21st of this month."

"I have in the Life of the Poet asserted that he was in great poverty before he died, and that sometimes, in the course of the spring of 1796, his family were all but wanting bread. Those who say he had good friends around him seem not to know that he had a soul too proud to solicit help, and to forget that there are hearts in the world ready to burst before they beg. The five pounds for which he solicited Thomson were to meet the demands of David Williamson, to whom he owed the price of the cloth of his volunteer regimentals—the money should have been paid in April: and the ten pounds which he requested, and by return of post obtained, from his cousin, James Burness, grandfather of Lieutenant Burness the Eastern Traveller, was for his wife, then about to be confined in child-bed. It is not known that he applied to any one else, and he would not have applied to either his cousin or to Thomson, had he not been sorely pressed: the fact of his being in want was known to all his neighbours, and admitted by himself.

"In this song—the last he was to measure in this world—his thoughts wandered to Charlotte Hamilton, and the banks of the Devon."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XCII.
G. THOMSON TO BURNS.

14th July, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

EVER since I received your melancholy letters by Mrs. Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of of-

* [It is almost unnecessary to say that this revisal Burns did not live to perform.]

fending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and, with great pleasure, inclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending.* Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake!

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you, in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of editor. In the mean time it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour: remember Pope published the Iliad by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute any thing I say to an unworthy motive. Yours, faithfully,

G. T.

The verses to "Rothemurche," will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

["The pecuniary circumstances attending Mr. Thomson's connection with Burns appear liable, at the present day, to much misapprehension. This gentleman, whose work has ultimately met with a good sale, seems to be regarded by some as an enriched man who measured a stinted reward to a poor one, looking for a greater recompense; and several writers have on this ground spoken of him in a very ungracious manner. When we go back to the time of the correspondence between the two men, and consider their respective circumstances, and the relation in which they came to stand towards each other, the conduct of Mr. Thomson assumes quite a different aspect. He and Burns were enthusiasts, the one in music, the other in poetry; they were both of them servants of the government, on limited salaries, with rising families. Mr. Thomson, with little prospect of profit, engaged in the preparation of a work, which was designed to set forth the music of his native land to every possible advantage, and of which the paper and print alone were likely to exhaust his very moderate resources. For literary aid, in this labour of love, he applied to the great Scottish Poet, who had already gratuitously assisted Johnson in his Scottish Musical Museum. Mr. Thomson offered reasonable remuneration; but the Poet scorned the idea of recompense, and declared he would write only because it gave him pleasure. Nevertheless, Mr. Thomson, in the course of their correspondence, ventured to send a pecuniary present, which, although not forming an adequate recompense for Burns's services, was still one which such men might be apt, at that period, to offer and accept from each other. This Burns, with hesitation, accepted; but sternly forbade any further remittance, protesting that it would put a period to their correspondence. Yet Mr. Thomson, from time to time, expressed his sense of obligation by presents of a different nature, and these the Poet accepted. Burns ultimately, on an emergency, requested a renewal of the former remittance, using such terms on the occasion as showed that his former scorn of all pecuniary remuneration was still a predominant feeling in his mind. Mr. Thomson, therefore, sent the very sum asked, believing, if he presumed to send more, that he would run a greater risk of offending than of gratifying the Poet in the then irritable state of his feelings. In all this we humbly conceive that no unprejudiced person at the time would have seen grounds for any charge against Mr. Thomson.

"It may further be remarked that, at the time of the Poet's death, though many songs had been written, only six had been published, namely, those in the first half volume, so that, during the life of the Poet, the publisher had realised nothing by the songs, and must have still been greatly doubtful if he should ever recover what he had already expended on the work. Before many more of the songs had appeared in connection with his music, the friends of the Poet's family had resolved to collect his works for publication; upon which Mr. Thomson thought it a duty incumbent on him to give up the manuscripts of the whole of the songs, together with the Poet's and his own letters, to Dr. Currie, that they might form part of the edition of Burns's works. The full benefit of them, as literary compositions, was thus realised *for the Poet's family*, Mr. Thomson only retaining an exclusive right to publish them afterwards in connection with the music. And hence, after all, the debtor side of his account with Burns is not so great as it is apt to appear. No further debate could arise on this subject, if it were to be regarded in the light in which the parties chiefly interested have regarded it. We see that Burns himself manifests no trace of a suspicion that his correspondent was a selfish or niggardly man; and it is equally certain that his surviving family always looked on that gentleman as one of the Poet's and their own kindest friends.

* ["The dying Poet wrote entreatingly for five pounds, and Thomson sent the exact sum which he requested, from inability to send more; or, as he avers, from a dread of giving offence to the sensitive mind of Burns. It would have been as well had the sum been larger; but one cannot well see how Thomson deserves censure for doing that, and no more, which his correspondent requested him to do. Professor Walker, a man little inclined to irony, says that, on this subject, the delicate mind of Mr. Thomson is at peace with itself."—CUNNINGHAM]

"It is a curious fact, not hitherto known to the public, nor even to Mr. Thomson himself, that the five pounds sent by him to Burns, as well as the larger sum which the Poet borrowed about the same time from his cousin, Mr. Burness of Montrose, were not made use of on the occasion, but that the bank orders for both sums remained in Burns's house at the time of his death. This is proved by the following document, for which we are indebted to Mr. Alexander Macdonald, of the General Register House, Edinburgh:—

"'The testament dative, and inventory of the debts and sums of money which were justly owing to the late Robert Burns, officer of excise in Dumfries, at the time of his decease, viz., the 21st day of July last, faithfully made out and given up by Jean Armour, widow of the said defunct, and executrix qua relict decerned to him by decreet dative of the Commissary of Dumfries, dated 16th September last.

"'There was justly owing to the said defunct, at the time of his decease aforesaid, the principal sum of five pounds sterling, contained in a promissory note, dated the 14th July last, granted by Sir William Forbes and Co., bankers in Edinburgh, to George Thomson, payable on demand; which note is by the said George Thomson indorsed, payable to the defunct: Item, the principal sum of ten pounds sterling, contained in a draft dated the 15th July last, drawn by Robert Christie upon the manager for the British Linen Co. in Edinburgh, in favour of James Burness or order; which draft is by the said James Burness indorsed payable to the defunct.

Sum of the debts owing to the defunct, £15 sterling.

"'Thomas Goldie of Craigmuie, commissary of the commissariat of Dumfries specially constituted for confirmation of testaments within the bounds of the said commissariat—understanding that, after due summoning and lawful warning, made by public form of edict of the executors, testamentary spouse, bairns, if any were, and intromitters with the goods and gear of the said Robert Burns, and all others having or pretending to have interest in the matter underwritten, &c. &c., I decerned therein, &c., and in His Majesty's name, constitute, ordain, and confirm the said Jean Armour, executrix qua relict to the said defunct, and in and to the debt and sums of money above written.—*At Dumfries, 6th Oct.* 1796.'"—CHAMBERS.]

["Mr. Thomson has been very much abused about this transaction, and, I confess, I do not know well what to say about it; but it must ever be regretted that George Thomson did not contrive to send him more at this dismal period than just the bare five pounds, when he could not but perceive the gloomy and altered state of the Poet's mind. After Burns' letter of July, 1793, I exculpate Mr. Thomson from making any attempts at remuneration, previous to the receiving this letter from Brow. But, all things considered, I wish to God he had sent him at least ten or twenty pounds, for his own honour, and that of the literary and musical character. I am quite aware that Mr. Thomson, at that period, could not have made any money from Burns' songs, but that, on the contrary, he must have been much money out of pocket, considering the efficient and costly way he took of bringing out the work. But then the songs were his, and poor Burns had toiled for him, while at the same time the speculation was certain and sure. Upon the whole, I cannot account for Mr. Thomson's parsimony here; for I know him well, and he is any thing but a close-fisted niggardly gentleman. In fact, he is quite the reverse, a kind open-hearted fellow, who entertains literary and musical people most liberally, as many of my acquaintance can witness. I have written a good many songs for him myself, and it was not for want of remuneration that I did not write far more; but then he is the most troublesome devil to write songs for that ever was created, for he is always either bothering one with alterations, or else popping them in himself. But, as to niggardliness in remuneration, I can bear testimony that he rather errs on the other side; and, as an instance, I was once out of pure shame obliged to return him a violin, which I was told was valued at £35, on pretence that I had a better one, and could not be plagued with another. Both Mrs. Hogg and I had previously got presents of sterling value. George Thomson is a pragmatical but real good man. What was done cannot be recalled; but it has been compensated since by every kindness in his power to bestow."—HOGG.]

["Thus terminated the correspondence of Burns with Thomson, in a manner as melancholy as it commenced joyously,—it ended in the death of one who was, and, we believe, ever will be, considered the first lyrist of his native land. On the willows of the winding Devon, the dying Bard suspended the harp of Coila, and long we fear is it destined to remain mute; for what master-hand can again touch its strings with such exquisite simplicity, skill, pathos, passion, and truth?

"In closing this portion of Burns' works, we can scarcely trust ourself to the expression of our own individual feelings. Men differently constituted feel and think differently; and hence, were we on this occasion to say what, on a review of the correspondence now before us, we both feel and think, our sentiments perhaps would merely represent our own peculiar idiosyncracies, instead of reflecting the sentiments and emotions of the greater bulk of mankind. Still it is a deeply affecting sight to behold a fellow-being of exalted genius, of a proud and peculiarly sensitive spirit, and a truly generous

heart, in the very prime of his days smitten with disease, slighted or shunned in a great measure by former friends, or those he deemed such, involved in misfortunes, and, by causes which need not be enumerated, steeped comparatively to the lips in poverty, stretched upon the bed of sickness, of suffering, and death, in circumstances so hapless and forlorn, so totally cheerless and desolate, as almost to leave no tender regret in his bosom at parting with all he once held dear or esteemed lovely on earth; or, using his own emphatic words, to sing, broken in spirit, and withered at heart,

> 'Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
> Now gay with the bright setting sun;
> Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties,
> Our race of existence is run.'

"We attach blame to no one and to no party; but we cannot conceal from ourself the mournful fact, knowing, as we almost fancy we do, the writhings and workings of such a mind as Burns was endowed with, that he literally died of a broken heart.

"With our friend the Shepherd, we must ever regret that Mr. Thomson was so exactly mercantile as to inclose to the dying poet precisely the sum which he sought the loan of, and, what is still more curious, the precise sum which he, Mr. Thomson, "proposed sending," apparently before, as may be inferred from his own words, he was aware of Burns' peculiarly embarrassed pecuniary circumstances, and almost hopeless state of health."—MOTHERWELL.]

[Alluding to this subject, Mr. Lockhart, in his admirable Life of the Poet, says, and we agree with him in opinion: "Why Burns, who was of opinion, when he wrote his letter to Mr. Carfrae, that 'no profits are more honourable than those of the labours of a man of genius,' and whose own notions of independence had sustained no shock on the receipt of hundreds of pounds from Creech, should have spurned the suggestion of pecuniary recompense from Mr. Thomson, it is no easy matter to explain: nor do I profess to understand why Mr. Thomson took so little pains to argue the matter *in limine* with the poet, and convince him that the time which he himself considered as fairly entitled to be paid for by a common bookseller ought of right to be valued and acknowledged on similar terms by the editor and proprietor of a book containing both songs and music."]

"Burns," says Professor Walker, "had all the unmanageable pride of Samuel Johnson, and, if the latter threw away with indignation the new shoes which had been placed at his chamber-door, secretly and collectively by his companions, the former would have been still more ready to resent any pecuniary donation with which a single individual, after his peremptory prohibition, should avowedly have dared to insult him. He would instantly have construed such conduct into a virtual assertion that his prohibition was insincere, and his independence affected; and the more artfully the transaction had been disguised, the more rage it would have excited, as implying the same assertion with the additional charge, that if secretly made it would not be denied." But on this subject the public have an opportunity of hearing Mr. Thomson himself, who expresses himself thus:—

"Upon my publishing the first twenty-five melodies with Pleyel's symphonies and accompaniments, and songs by different authors, six of Burns' songs being of the number, (and those six were all I published in his life-time), I, of course, sent a copy of this half volume to the Poet: and as a mark of my gratitude for his excessive kindness, I ventured, with all possible delicacy, to send him a small pecuniary present, notwithstanding what he had said on the subject. He retained it after much hesitation, but wrote me (Letter 28) that, if I presumed to repeat it, he would, on the least motion of it, indignantly spurn what was past, and commence entire stranger to me.

"Who that reads the letter above referred to, and the first one which the Poet sent me, can think I have deserved the abuse which anonymous scribblers have poured upon me, for not endeavouring to remunerate the Poet? If I had dared to go farther than I did, in sending him money, is it not perfectly clear that he would have deemed it an insult, and ceased to write another song for me?

"Had I been a selfish or avaricious man, I had a fair opportunity, upon the death of the Poet, to put money in my pocket; for I might then have published, for my own behoof, all the beautiful lyrics he had written for me, the original manuscripts of which were in my possession. But instead of doing this, I was no sooner informed that the friends of the Poet's family had come to a resolution to collect his works, and to publish them for the benefit of the family, and that they thought it of importance to include my MSS., as being likely, from their number, their novelty, and beauty, to prove an attraction to subscribers, than I felt it at once my duty to put them in possession of all the songs and of the correspondence between the Poet and myself, and accordingly, through Mr. John Syme, of Ryedale, I transmitted the whole to Dr. Currie, who had been prevailed on, immensely for the advantage of Mrs. Burns and her children, to take on himself the task of editor.

"For thus surrendering the manuscripts, I received both verbally, and in writing, the warm thanks of the Trustees for the family, Mr. John Syme, and Mr. Gilbert Burns; who considered what I had done as a fair return for the Poet's generosity of conduct to me.

"If any thing more were wanting to set me right, with respect to the anonymous calumnies circulated to my prejudice, in regard to the Poet, I have it in my power to refer to a most respectable testimonial which, to my very agreeable surprise, was sent me by Professor Josiah Walker, one of the Poet's Biographers: and, had I not been reluctant to obtrude myself on the public, I should long since have given it publicity. The Professor wrote me as follows:—

Perth, 14th April, 1811.

"'DEAR SIR:

"'Before I left Edinburgh, I sent a copy of my account of Burns to Lord Woodhouselee; and since my return I have had a letter from his Lordship, which among other passages, contains one that I cannot withhold from you! He writes thus:—I am glad that you have embraced the occasion which lay in your way, of doing full justice to Mr. George Thomson, who, I agree with you in thinking, was most harshly and illiberally treated by an anonymous dull calumniator. I have always regarded Mr. Thomson as a man of great worth and most respectable character: and I have every reason to believe that poor Burns felt himself as much indebted to his good counsels and active friendship as a man, as the public is sensible he was to his good taste and judgment as a critic!'

"Of the unbiassed opinion of such a highly respectable gentleman and accomplished scholar as Lord Woodhouselee, I certainly feel not a little proud: it is of itself more than sufficient to silence the calumnies by which I have been assailed, first, anonymously, and afterwards, to my great surprise, by some writers who might have been expected to possess sufficient judgment to see the matter in its true light."

G. T.

"To this letter of my excellent friend Mr. Thomson," says Chambers, "little can be added. His work, the labour of his life-time, has long been held the classical depository of Scottish melody and song, and is extensively known. His own character, in the city where he has spent so many years, has ever stood high. It was scarcely necessary that Mr. Thomson should enter into a defence of himself, against the inconsiderate charges which have been brought against him.

"When Burns refused remuneration from one whom he knew to be, like himself, of the generation of Apollo, rather than of Plutus, and while his musical friend was only entering upon a task, the results of which no one could tell, how can Mr. Thomson be fairly blamed?

"If a moderate success ultimately crowned his enterprise and toil, and the success has probably been much more moderate than Mr. Thomson's assailants suppose—long after the poor bard was beyond the reach of money, and all superior consolations,—who can envy it, or who can say that it offers any offence to the manes of the unhappy poet? The charge was indeed never preferred but in ignorance, and would be totally unworthy of notice, if ignorant parties were still apt to be imposed upon by it."

ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM AND HIS FAITHLESS FAIR ONE.

THE story of Cunningham's unfaithful mistress, which is alluded to in the song, "Now Spring has clad the grove in green," p. 506; as well as in the songs, "She's fair and fause," p. 417, and "Had I a Cave on some wild distant shore," p. 467, made a great sensation at the time, and has been kept in remembrance by the verses of the Poet. "One evening, a very few years ago," says Mr. Chambers, in 1838, "a friend of mine, visiting a musical family who resided opposite St. John's Chapel, in Prince's-street, chanced to request one of the young ladies to sing "Had I a Cave," &c. She was about to comply, when it was recollected that the heroine of the lay lived below, an aged widow, and might overhear it; for which reason the intention of singing the song was laid aside."

The "fair and fause" Peggy in question, after "plighting her troth" with Cunningham, married the late Dr. Dewar, of Princes' Street, Edinburgh. At his death he left three daughters and a son, who were all well provided for—the latter became an Advocate at the Scottish Bar, but to the great mortification and disappointment of his widow, he left her only one hundred pounds per ann., which made her in a great measure dependant on her son, having been accustomed for many years to live in the first style. Here was something like retributive justice!—Her second daughter was the celebrated Jessie Dewar, the loveliest girl that at one period adorned the Scottish metropolis. A young Clerk in the Royal Bank, of the name of L———, went almost out of his wits regarding her, and annoyed her exceedingly. Kay, the celebrated Caricaturist, published an admirable likeness of the fair girl, with her tormentor following her, and vociferating, "If it were not for these d—d blankets, I would have got her!" alluding to his mother having for many years been a retailer of Flannels in the High Street, Edinburgh. This created a good deal of merriment at the time, and the lovely young Jessie was no longer tormented by his addresses. She afterwards married the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Tourner, and is now settled in London.

The lady whom Burns has immortalized in these three songs, above alluded to, was the prototype of her lovely daughter. Every thing had been arranged for her marriage with Cunningham, who was devotedly attached to her; indeed, for a time it appears to have been reciprocated:—

"But woman is but warld's gear."

Dr. Dewar, who had been paying her professional and friendly visits at the same time, made her many handsome presents; and, although her senior for many years, and not to be compared to his rival in personal appearance, or talents, he persuaded her to break off the match. Cunningham at that time not being in affluent circumstances, and the lady knowing that the Doctor had "wrouth o' gear," she consented to marry him. This was a shock which poor Cunningham never got the better of,

"Till grief his eyes did close,
Ne'er to weep more."

Such was the strength of his affection for the object of his blighted love that, long after she had jilted him, he has been seen stealthily for many an evening in the gloaming, to traverse for hours the opposite side of the street where she resided—pause for a moment opposite her windows, and when he had caught a glimpse of her, burst into tears—then wend his way slowly home by the most lonely path—his handkerchief over his eyes, completely absorbed in grief. Time mollified his hopeless passion; and his friends, knowing his extreme susceptibility, always avoided the slightest allusion to the circumstance. He died a few years' since, beloved and respected by all who had the happiness of his acquaintance.

REMARKS

ON

SCOTTISH SONGS AND BALLADS,

ANCIENT AND MODERN;

WITH

ANECDOTES OF THEIR AUTHORS.

BY

ROBERT BURNS.

"There needs na' be so great a phrase,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,
I wad na gi'e our ain Strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' 'em;
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Douff and dowie, douff and dowie;
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Wi' a' their variorum:
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Their Allegroes, and a' the rest,
They cannot please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum."

REV. JOHN SKINNER.

[THE following Remarks on Scottish Song exist in the hand writing of Burns, in an interleaved copy of the first four volumes of Johnson's Musical Museum, which the Poet presented to Captain Riddel, of Friar's Carse. On the death of Mrs. Riddel, these precious volumes passed into the hands of her niece, Eliza Bayley, of Manchester, who kindly permitted Mr. Cromek to transcribe and publish them in his volume of the Reliques of Burns.

These remarks now form an integral part in all modern editions of the Poet's works.

Respecting the songs which form the subject of these remarks, Dr. Currie says:—"In the changes of language these songs may no doubt suffer change; but the associated strain of sentiment and of music will perhaps survive, while the clear stream sweeps down the vale of Yarrow, or the yellow broom waves on the Cowden-knowes."]

The Highland Queen.

THE Highland Queen, music and poetry, was composed by Mr. M'Vicar, purser of the Solebay man of war.—This I had from Dr. Blacklock.

[The Highland King, intended as a parody on the former, was the production of a young lady, the friend of Charles Wilson, of Edinburgh, who edited a collection of Songs, entitled "Cecilia," which appeared in 1779.

The following are specimens of these songs:—

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN.

How blest that youth whom gentle fate
Has destin'd for so fair a mate!
Has all these wond'ring gifts in store,
And each returning day brings more;
No youth so happy can be seen,
Possessing thee, my Highland Queen.

THE HIGHLAND KING.

Jamie, the pride of a' the green,
Is just my age, e'en gay fifteen:
When first I saw him, 'twas the day
That ushers in the sprightly May;
Then first I felt love's powerful sting,
And sigh'd for my dear Highland King.

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN.

No sordid wish, nor trifling joy,
Her settled calm of mind destroy;
Strict honour fills her spotless soul,
And adds a lustre to the whole:

A matchless shape, a graceful mien,
All centre in my Highland Queen.

THE HIGHLAND KING.

Would once the dearest boy but say
'Tis you I love; come, come away
Unto the Kirk, my love, let's hie—
Oh me! in rapture, I comply:
And I should then have cause to sing
The praises of my Highland King.]

Bess the Gawkie.

THIS song shews that the Scottish Muses did not all leave us when we lost Ramsay and Oswald;* as I have good reason to believe that the verses and music are both posterior to the days of these two gentlemen. It is a beautiful song, and in the genuine Scots taste. We have few pastoral compositions, I mean the pastoral of nature, that are equal to this.

[The Author of this song was the Rev. James Morehead, the minister of Urr, in Galloway: he was a maker of verses, and, falling under the lash of Burns, avenged himself by some satiric lines which have much ill nature but no wit. He died in 1808. The song of Bess the Gawkie gives a lively image of the northern manners. —RITSON.]

BLYTHE young Bess to Jean did say,
Will ye gang to yon sunny brae,
Where flocks do feed and herds do stray
And sport awhile wi' Jamie?
Ah na, lass, I'll no gang there,
Nor about Jamie tak nae care,
Nor about Jamie tak nae care,
For he's taen up wi' Maggy!

For hark, and I will tell you, lass,
Did I not see your Jamie pass,
Wi' meikle gladness in his face,
Out o'er the muir to Maggy?
I wat he gae her mony a kiss,
And Maggy took them ne'er amiss;
'Tween ilka smack, pleas'd her with this,
That Bess was but a gawkie.

But whisht!—nae mair of this we'll speak,
For yonder Jamie does us meet;
Instead of Meg he kiss'd sae sweet,
I trow he likes the gawkie.

O dear Bess, I hardly knew,
When I came by, your gown's sae new,
I think you've got it wet wi' dew;
Quoth she, that's like a gawkie.

The lasses fast frae him they flew,
And left poor Jamie sair to rue
That ever Maggy's face he knew,
Or yet ca'd Bess a gawkie.
As they went o'er the muir they sang,
The hills and dales with echoes rang,
The hills and dales with echoes rang,
Gang o'er the muir to Maggy.

Oh, open the Door, Lord Gregory.

IT is somewhat singular that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries-shires, there is scarcely an old song or tune which, from the title, &c., can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of, these counties. This, I conjecture, is one of these very few; as the ballad, which is a long one, is called, both by tradition and in printed collections, "The Lass of Lochroyan," which I take to be Lochroyan in Galloway.†

[This is a very ancient Gallowegian melody. The two verses adapted to the air, in the Museum, were compiled from the fine old ballad entitled "The Lass of Lochroyan," which was first published in a perfect state by Sir Walter Scott in his Minstrelsy of the Border. They are as follow:—

OH, open the door, Lord Gregory,
Oh, open and let me in;
The wind blows thro' my yellow hair,
The dew draps o'er my chin.
If you are the lass that I lov'd once,
As I trow you are not she,
Come gi'e me some of the tokens
That pass'd 'tween you and me.

Ah, wae be to you, Gregory!
An ill death may you die;
You will not be the death of one,
But you'll be the death of three.
Oh, don't you mind, Lord Gregory?
'Twas down at yonder burn side
We chang'd the ring off our fingers,
And I put mine on thine.]

* Oswald was a music-seller in London, where he published a collection of Scottish tunes, called "The Caledonian's Pocket Companion;" Tytler, in his treatise on music, observes that his genius in composition was sound, and his taste in the performance of Scottish music was natural and pathetic.

† [In this sweeping assertion Burns is somewhat mistaken; "Johnnie Faa, or the Gipsy Laddie," "The Lowlands of Holland," "Lord James Douglas," "The Western Tragedy, or the False Sir John," otherwise called "May Collean," "The Young Laird Ochiltrie," "Johnnie Armstrong," "Lady Bothwell's Lament," "O Bothwell bank, thou bloomest fair," with many other old traditionary ballads, are all locally identified with one or other of these proscribed counties. Burns is right in his supposition of the ballad now mentioned referring to Loch Ryan in Galloway. The idea of Burns's "Lord Gregory" is obviously taken from this fine old ballad.—MOTHERWELL.]

The Banks of the Tweed.

THIS song is one of the many attempts that English composers have made to imitate the Scottish manner, and which I shall, in these strictures, beg leave to distinguish by the appellation of *Anglo-Scottish* productions. The music is pretty good, but the verses are just above contempt.

[The song has the form of a pastoral drama: a shepherdess sings of the object of her love: the swain hears, and is enraptured:—the strain concludes with the following verse:—

For to visit my ewes, and to see my lambs play,
By the banks of the Tweed and the groves I did stray; [sigh'd,
But my Jenny, dear Jenny, how oft have I
And have vow'd endless love if you would be my bride.

To the altar of Hymen, my fair one, repair,
Where a knot of affection shall tie the fond pair,
To the pipe's sprightly notes the gay dance will we lead, [the Tweed.
And will bless the dear grove by the banks of

The air was very popular at one time in Scotland; and Johnson, at the request of several of his subscribers, was induced to give it an early place in his work. The greater part of the first volume of the Museum was engraved before Burns and Johnson became acquainted.]

The Beds of sweet Roses.

This song, as far as I know, for the first time appears here in print.—When I was a boy, it was a very popular song in Ayr-shire. I remember to have heard those fanatics, the Buchanites, sing some of their nonsensical rhymes, which they dignify with the name of hymns, to this air.*

["With the Buchanites, tradition avers that Burns was more than well acquainted. A certain western damsel, with a light foot and an ensnaring eye, was captivated by the pictures of primitive enjoyment which "our lady" (so her followers called Mrs. Buchan) painted, and, leaving Kyle, united herself to the household of that singular fanatic. The Poet, it is said, spent a whole day and night in an attempt to persuade the fair enthusiast to return: she preferred the multitude, and Burns returned to his plough and his poetry."—CUNNINGHAM.]

The song of "The Beds of Sweet Roses" is as follows:—

As I was a walking one morning in May,
The little birds were singing delightful and gay;
The little birds were singing delightful and gay;
When I and my true love did often sport and play,
Down among the beds of sweet roses, [play,
Where I and my true love did often sport and
Down among the beds of sweet roses."

My daddy and my mammy I oft have heard them say,
That I was a naughty boy, and did often sport and play; [was shy,
But I never liked in all my life a maiden that
Down among the beds of sweet roses.]

Roslin Castle.

THESE beautiful verses were the production of a Richard Hewit, a young man that Dr. Blacklock (to whom I am indebted for the anecdote) kept for some years as an amanuensis.† I do not know who is the author of the second song to the same tune. Tytler, in his amusing history of Scottish music, gives the air to Oswald; but in Oswald's own collection of Scots tunes, when he affixes an asterisk to those he himself composed, he does not make the least claim to the tune.

[Oswald was not the composer of the air of Roslin Castle. The same tune, note for note, appears in a prior publication—M'Gibbon's collection of Scots tunes, under the title of "House of Glams." The words of both the songs to this air appeared in Herd's Collection, printed in 1776. We subjoin them both:—

ROSLIN CASTLE.

'TWAS in that season of the year,
When all things gay and sweet appear,
That Colin, with the morning ray,
Arose and sung his rural lay.

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* [Shakspeare, in his "Winter's Tale," alludes to a Puritan who sings psalms to hornpipes.]

† [Richard Hewit, Ritson observes, was taken when a boy, during the residence of Dr. Blacklock in Cumberland, to lead him.—He addressed a copy of verses to the Doctor on quitting his service. Among the verses are the following lines:

"How oft these plains I've thoughtless prest;
Whistled or sung some fair distrest,
When fate would steal a tear."

"Alluding," as it said in a note, "to a sort of narrative songs, which make no inconsiderable part of the innocent amusements with which the country people pass the wintry nights, and of which the author of the present piece was a faithful rehearser."

Henry Mackenzie, in his edition of Blacklock's Poems, Edinburgh, 1793, informs us that Hewit subsequently became Secretary to Lord Milton (then Lord Justice Clerk, and Sub-Minister for Scotland, under the Duke of Argyle); but that the fatigue of that station hurt his health, and he died in 1794.]

Of Nanny's charms the shepherd sung,
The hills and dales with Nanny rung;
While Roslin Castle heard the swain,
And echo'd back the cheerful strain.

Awake, sweet Muse! the breathing spring
With rapture warms; awake and sing!
Awake and join the vocal throng
Who hail the morning with a song;
To Nanny raise the cheerful lay,
O! bid her haste and come away;
In sweetest smiles herself adorn,
And add new graces to the morn!

O, hark, my love! on ev'ry spray
Each feather'd warbler tunes his lay;
'Tis beauty fires the ravish'd throng,
And love inspires the melting song:
Then let my raptur'd notes arise,
For beauty darts from Nanny's eyes;
And love my rising bosom warms,
And fills my soul with sweet alarms."]

SECOND VERSION.

From Roslin Castle's echoing walls,
Resound my shepherd's ardent calls;
My Colin bids me come away,
And love demands I should obey.
His melting strain, and tuneful lay,
So much the charms of love display,
I yield—nor longer can refrain,
To own my love, and bless my swain.

No longer can my heart conceal
The painful-pleasing flame I feel:
My soul retorts the am'rous strain;
And echoes back in love again.
Where lurks my songster? from what grove
Does Colin pour his notes of love?
O bring me to the happy bower,
Where mutual love my bliss secure!

Ye vocal hills, that catch the song,
Repeating as it flies along,
To Colin's ears my strain convey,
And say, I haste to come away.
Ye zephyrs soft, that fan the gale,
Waft to my love the soothing tale:
In whispers all my soul express,
And tell I haste his arms to bless!

O! come, my love! thy Colin's lay
With rapture calls, O come away!
Come while the muse this wreath shall twine
Around that modest brow of thine;
O! hither haste, and with thee bring
That beauty blooming like the spring;
Those graces that divinely shine,
And charm this ravish'd breast of mine!

Saw ye Johnnie cummin? quo' she.

This song, for genuine humour in the verses, and lively originality in the air, is unparalleled. I take it to be very old.

[This observation had been hastily made, for the air, either when played or sung slowly, as it ought to be, is exceedingly pathetic, not lively. Burns afterwards became sensible of this, for in his letter to Thomson (No. XLII.) he says, "I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune; when he plays it slow, in fact, he makes it the language of despair. Were it possible in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirable pathetic song." Mr. Thomas Fraser, to whom Burns alludes, was an intimate acquaintance of the Poet, and an excellent musician. In 1820, he was the principal oboe concerto player in Edinburgh, of which city he was a native. His style of playing the melodies of Scotland was peculiarly chaste and masterly. He died in 1825. The song in the Museum is as follows:—

"Saw ye Johnnie cummin? quo' she,
Saw ye Johnnie cummin,
O saw ye Johnnie cummin, quo', she;
Saw ye Johnnie cummin,
Wi' his blue bonnet on his head,
And his doggie runnin', quo' she;
And his doggie runnin?

Fee him, father, fee him, quo' she;
Fee him, father, fee him:
For he is a gallant lad,
And a weel doin';
And a' the wark about the house
Gaes wi' me when I see him, quo' she;
Wi' me when I see him.

What will I do wi' him, hussy?
What will I do wi' him?
He's ne'er a sark upon his back,
And I hae nane to gie him.
I hae twa sarks into my kist,
And ane o' them I'll gie him,
And for a mark of mair fee,
Dinna stand wi' him, quo' she;
Dinna stand wi' him.

For weel do I lo'e him, quo' she:
Weel do I lo'e him:
O fee him, father, fee him, quo' she;
Fee him, father, fee him:
He'll haud the pleugh, thrash i' the barn,
And lie wi' me at e'en, quo' she;
Lie wi' me at e'en."]

Clout the Caldron.

A tradition is mentioned in the "Bee," that the second Bishop Chisholm, of Dunblane,

used to say that, if he were going to be hanged, nothing would soothe his mind so much by the way as to hear "Clout the Caldron" played.

I have met with another tradition, that the old song to this tune,

"Hae ye ony pots or pans,
Or onie broken chanlers,"

was composed on one of the Kenmure family in the cavalier times; and alluded to an amour he had, while under hiding, in the disguise of an itinerant tinker. The air is also known by the name of

"The Blacksmith and his Apron,"

which, from the rhythm, seems to have been a line of some old song to the tune

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[The song of "Clout the Caldron" is familiar to all who love native humour: it is still sung over the punch-bowl, and continues to exercise its old influence when sung with true simplicity and pawkie naïveté:

I.

"Hae ye ony pots or pans,
Or ony broken chanlers?
For I'm a tinker to my trade,
And newly come frae Flanders,
As scant o' siller as o' grace,
Disbanded, we've a bad run;
Gang tell the lady o' the place,
I'm come to clout her caldron

II.

Madam, if ye hae wark for me,
I'll do't to your contentment,
And dinna care a single flie
For ony man's resentment:
For, lady fair, though I appear
To every ane a tinker,
Yet to yoursel I'm bauld to tell
I am a gentle jinker.

III.

Love, Jupiter into a swan
Turn'd for his lovely Leda;
He like a bull o'er meadows ran,
To carry off Europa.
Then may not I, as well as he,
To cheat your Argus blinker,
And win your love, like mighty Jove,
Thus hide me in a tinker?"

IV.

"Sir, ye appear a cunning man,
But this fine plot ye'll fail in,
For there is neither pot nor pan
Of mine ye'll drive a nail in.
Then bind your budget on your back,
And nails up in your apron,
For I've a tinker under tack
That's us'd to clout my caldron."]

Saw ye nae my Peggy?

This charming song is much older, and indeed superior to Ramsay's verses, "The Toast," as he calls them. There is another set of the words, much older still, and which I take to be the original one, but though it has a very great deal of merit, it is not quite ladies' reading.

The original words, for they can scarcely be called verses, seem to be as follows; a song familiar from the cradle to every Scottish ear.

"Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie
Linkin o'er the lea?

High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
Her coat aboon her knee.

What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
That ane may ken her be? (by.)"*

Though it by no means follows that the silliest verses to an air must, for that reason, be the original song; yet I take this ballad, of which I have quoted part, to be the old verses. The two songs in Ramsay, one of them evidently his own, are never to be met with in the fire-side circle of our peasantry; while that which I take to be the old song, is in every shepherd's mouth. Ramsay, I suppose, had thought the old verses unworthy of a place in his collection.

["Saw ye nae my Peggy,
Saw ye nae my Peggy,
Saw ye nae my Peggy,
Coming o'er the lea?
Sure a finer creature
Ne'er was form'd by nature,
So complete each feature,
So divine is she.

O! how Peggy charms me!
Every look still warms me;
Every thought alarms me;
Lest she love nae me.
Peggy doth discover
Nought but charms all over;
Nature bids me love her,
That's a law to me.

* The following verse was added by the Ettrick Shepherd:—

"Maggy's a lovely woman,
She proves true to no man,
She proves true to no man,
An' has proven false to me."

Who would leave a lover,
To become a rover?
No, I'll ne'er give over,
Till I happy be!
For since love inspires me,
As her beauty fires me,
And her absence tires me,
Nought can please but she.

When I hope to gain her,
Fate seems to detain her,
Could I but obtain her,
Happy would I be!
I'll lie down before her,
Bless, sigh, and adore her,
With faint look implore her,
Till she pity me!]

The Flowers of Edinburgh.

THIS song is one of the many effusions of Scots Jacobitism.* The title "Flowers of Edinburgh," has no manner of connexion with the present verses, so I suspect there has been an older set of words, of which the title is all that remains.

By the bye, it is singular enough that the Scottish Muses were all Jacobites. I have paid more attention to every description of Scots songs than perhaps any body living has done, and I do not recollect one single stanza, or even the title of the most trifling Scots air, which has the least panegyrical reference to the families of Nassau or Brunswick; while there are hundreds satirizing them. This may be thought no panegyric on the Scots Poets, but I mean it as such. For myself, I would always take it as a compliment to have it said that my heart ran before my head;† and surely the gallant though unfortunate house of Stuart, the kings of our fathers for so many heroic ages, is a theme much more interesting than * * * * * * * * * * *

[Some one passed a pen through the remain-

* [The grounds our poet had for conjecturing that this song was a Jacobite effusion, do not appear to be sufficiently plain. No such song as the one alluded to is known to exist. Subsequent to the year 1745, indeed, there was a Jacobite ballad, which was frequently sung to this air, beginning:—

To your arms, to your arms, my bonnie Highland lads!
To your arms, to your arms, at the touk o' the drum!
The battle-trumpet sounds, put on your white cockades,
For Charlie, the great Prince Regent, is come.

But this ballad, which appears in Hogg's Jacobite Reliques, has no allusion whatever to *The Flowers of Edinburgh*. It seems more likely that the composer had given it the name in compliment to the young ladies of the Scottish metropolis, who were then attending the dancing schools. Burns further remarks, that "it is singular enough that the Scottish muses were all Jacobites." But there are many songs composed in Scotland, at the time, directly opposed to Jacobitism. The following loyal song, composed for the use of the Revolution Club, part of which was afterwards printed at Edinburgh, by Donaldson and Reid, in 1761, may not be unacceptable to the reader:—

HIGHLAND LADDIE.

I.

WHEN you came over first frae France,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
You swore to lead our King a dance,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
And promis'd, on your royal word,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
To mak' the Duke dance o'er the sword,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.

II.

When he to you began to play,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
You quat the green and ran away,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
The dance thus turn'd into a chase,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
It must be own'd you wan the race,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.

III.

Your partners that came o'er frae *France,*
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
They understood not a *Scots* dance,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
Therefore, their complaisance to shew,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
Unto our Duke they bow'd right low,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.

IV.

If e'er you come to dance again,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
New dancers you must bring frae Spain,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
And, that all things may be secure,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
See that your dancers be not poor,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.

V.

I think insurance you should make,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
Lest dancing you should break your neck,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.
For he that dances on a rope,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
Should not trust all unto the Pope,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.

VI.

For dancing you were never made,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
Then, while 'tis time, leave off the trade,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
Be thankful for your last escape,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
And, like your brother,* take a Cap,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie.]

† ["Poor Burns!—Thy heart indeed ran always before thy head; but never didst thou fail to carry thy reader's heart along with thee.—Instead of kindling at the indignities offered to thy native land, hadst thou been a wise and a prudent poet, thou wouldst have tuned thy lyre to the praise of some powerful family, and carefully abstained from drawing on thy head the resentment of the guilty great, or their descendants. Thou mightest then have rolled in affluence, and ceased to struggle under the insulting taunts of every little upstart in office. Thou mightest have flourished in thy day, and left behind thee an offspring securely treading the path of honours and preferment, instead of leaving thy wife and children poor and pennyless, at the mercy of the world.—All this thou mightest have done; but then thou wouldst not have been a poet.—I do not mean to say that poetry and prudence are altogether incompatible; but that prudence which would stifle the feelings which should glow in every manly bosom, can never exist with true and genuine poetry. The prudence that would suppress the indignant strain of a Campbell at the horrors of Warsaw, or see unmoved the smoking villages and unhallowed butchery which followed in the train of Culloden, the unsophisticated muse will ever disdain. He can never be a poet who does not feel as a man."—CROMEK.]

* Cardinal York, brother of Charles, and second son of James, denominated the "Pretender."

ing words of the sentence, and the Poet's eulogium on our native race of princes must remain imperfect. We subjoin a few verses of—

The Flowers of Edinburgh.

My love was once a bonnie lad;
He was the flow'r of a' his kin;
The absence of his bonnie face
Has rent my tender heart in twain.
I day nor night find no delight—
In silent tears I still complain;
And exclaim 'gainst those, my rival foes.
That hae taen frae me my darling swain.

Despair and anguish fill my breast
Since I have lost my blooming rose:
I sigh and moan while others rest;
His absence yields me no repose.
To seek my love I'll range and rove
Thro' every grove and distant plain;
Thus I'll never cease, but spend my days
T' hear tidings from my darling swain.

There 's nothing strange in nature's change,
Since parents shew such cruelty;
They caus'd my love from me to range,
And know not to what destiny.
The pretty kids and tender lambs
May cease to sport upon the plain;
But I'll mourn and lament, in deep discontent,
For the absence of my darling swain!]

Jamie Gay.

Jamie Gay is another and a tolerable Anglo-Scottish piece.

[Of Jamie Gay it will be enough to quote the first line:

"As Jamie Gay gang'd blythe his way."

A Scottish bard would have written:

"As Jamie Gay gaed blythe his way."

The song was originally entitled "The happy Meeting," and was frequently sung at Ranelagh with great applause.]

My dear Jockey.

Another Anglo-Scottish production.

[The melody is uncommonly pretty. We subjoin the first two verses of the lady's lament.

"My laddie is gane far away o'er the plain,
While in sorrow behind I am forc'd to remain;
Tho' blue bells and violets the hedges adorn,
Tho' trees are in blossom and sweet blows the thorn,
No pleasure they give me, in vain they look gay;
There's nothing can please me now Jockey's away;
Forlorn I sit singing, and this is my strain,
'Haste, haste, my dear Jockey, to me back again.'

When lads and their lasses are on the green met,
They dance and they sing, and they laugh and they chat;
Contented and happy, with hearts full of glee,
I can't, without envy, their merriment see:
Those pleasures offend me, my shepherd's not there!
No pleasure I relish that Jockey don't share;
It makes me to sigh, I from tears scarce refrain,
I wish my dear Jockey return'd back again."]

Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' Strae.

It is self-evident that the first four lines of this song are part of a song more ancient than Ramsay's beautiful verses which are annexed to them. As music is the language of nature; and poetry, particularly songs, are always less or more localized (if I may be allowed the verb) by some of the modifications of time and place, this is the reason why so many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses; except a single name, or phrase, or sometimes one or two lines, simply to distinguish the tunes by.

To this day, among people, who know nothing of Ramsay's verses, the following is the song, and all the song that ever I heard:

"Gin ye meet a bonnie lassie,
Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
But gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae.

Fye, gae rub her, rub her, rub her,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae:
And gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae."

["Ramsay's spirited imitation," says Cromek, "of the '*Vides ut alta stet nive candidum, Socrate,*' of Horace, is considered as one of the happiest efforts of the author's genius.—For a very elegant critique on the poem, and a comparison of its merits with those of the original, the reader is referred to Lord Woodhouselee's '*Remarks on the Writings of Ramsay.*'

"Look up to Pentland's tow'ring tap,
Bury'd beneath great wreaths of snaw,
O'er ilka cleugh, ilk scar, and slap,
As high as ony Roman wa'.

Driving their baws frae whins or tee,
There are nae gowfers to be seen;
Nor dousser fowk wysing a-jee
The byass-bouls on Tamson's Green.

Then fling on coals, and ripe the ribs,
And beek the house baith but and ben;
That mutchkin stowp it hauds but dribs,
Then let's get in the tappit hen.

Good claret best keeps out the cauld,
And drives away the winter soon;
It makes a man baith gash and bauld,
And heaves his soul beyond the moon.

Let next day come as it thinks fit,
The present minute's only ours,
On pleasure let's employ our wit,
And laugh at Fortune's fickle pow'rs.

Be sure ye dinna quit the grip
Of ilka joy, when ye are young,
Before auld age your vitals nip,
And lay ye twafald o'er a rung.

Now to her heaving bosom cling,
And sweetly tastie for a kiss;
Frae her fair finger whoop a ring,
As token of a future bliss.

These benisons, I'm very sure,
Are of the Gods' indulgent grant;
Then, surly Carles, whisht, forbear,
To plague us wi' your whining cant.

Sweet youth's a blyth and heartsome time;
Then, lads and lasses, while 'tis May,
Gae pu' the gowan in its prime,
Before it wither and decay.

Watch the saft minutes of delyte,
When Jenny speaks beneath her breath,
And kisses, laying a' the wyte
On you, if she kepp ony skaith,

'Haith, ye're ill-bred,' she'll smiling say;
'Ye'll worry me, ye greedy rook;'
Syne frae your arms she'll rin away,
And hide hersel in some dark nook.

Her laugh will lead you to the place
Where lies the happiness you want,
And plainly tells you, to your face,
Nineteen nay-says are ha'f a grant."

The song of "Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae" is composed of the first four lines mentioned by Burns, and the seven concluding verses of Ramsay's spirited and elegant Scottish version of Horace's ninth Ode, given above.]

The Lass of Livingston.

THE old song, in three eight line stanzas, is well known, and has merit as to wit and humour; but it is rather unfit for insertion.—It begins,

"THE bonnie lass o' Livingston,
Her name ye ken, her name ye ken,
And she has written in her contract,
To lie her lane, to lie her lane."
&c. &c. &c.

[The modern version by Allan Ramsay is as follows:—

"PAIN'D with her slighting Jamie's love,
Bell dropt a tear, Bell dropt a tear;
The gods descended from above,
Well pleas'd to hear, well pleas'd to hear.
They heard the praises of the youth
From her own tongue, from her own tongue,
Who now converted was to truth,
And thus she sung, and thus she sung:

Bless'd days, when our ingenious sex,
More frank and kind—more frank & kind,
Did not their lov'd adorers vex,
But spoke their mind—but spoke their mind.
Repenting now, she promis'd fair,
Would he return—would he return,
She ne'er again wou'd give him care,
Or cause to mourn, or cause to mourn.

Why lov'd I the deserving swain, [shame,
Yet still thought shame—yet still thought
When he my yielding heart did gain,
To own my flame—to own my flame.
Why took I pleasure to torment,
And seem too coy—and seem too coy,
Which makes me now, alas! lament
My slighted joy—my slighted joy!

Ye Fair, while beauty's in its spring,
Own your desire—own your desire,
While love's young pow'r, with his soft wing,
Fans up the fire—fans up the fire;
O do not with a silly pride,
Or low design—or low design,
Refuse to be a happy bride,
But answer plain—but answer plain.

Thus the fair mourner 'wail'd her crime,
With flowing eyes—with flowing eyes,
Glad Jamie heard her all the time
With sweet surprise—with sweet surprise.
Some god had led him to the grove,
His mind unchang'd—his mind unchang'd;
Flew to her arms, and cried, my love,
I am reveng'd—I am reveng'd."]

The last Time I came o'er the Moor.

RAMSAY found the first line of this song, which had been preserved as the title of the charming air, and then composed the rest of the verses to suit that line. This has always a finer effect than composing English words, or words with an idea foreign to the spirit of the old title. Where old titles of songs convey any idea at all, it will generally be found to be quite in the spirit of the air.

["There are," says Allan Cunningham, "some fine verses in this song, though some fastidious critics pronounce them over warm:—

THE last time I came o'er the moor,
I left my love behind me;
Ye powers, what pain do I endure,
When soft ideas mind me.
Soon as the ruddy morn display'd
The beaming day ensuing,
I met betimes my lovely maid
In fit retreats for wooing.

Beneath the cooling shade we lay,
Gazing and chastely sporting;
We kiss'd and promis'd time away,
Till night spread her black curtain.
I pitied all beneath the skies,
Ev'n kings, when she was nigh me;
In rapture I beheld her eyes,
Which could but ill deny me.

Should I be call'd where cannons roar,
Where mortal steel may wound me;
Or cast upon some foreign shore,
Where danger may surround me;
Yet hopes again to see my love,
And feast on glowing kisses,
Shall make my cares at distance move,
In prospect of such blisses.

In all my soul there's not one place
To let a rival enter;
Since she excels in ev'ry grace,
In her my love shall centre:
Sooner the seas shall cease to flow,
Their waves the Alps shall cover,
On Greenland ice shall roses grow,
Before I cease to love her.

The next time I go o'er the moor,
She shall a lover find me;
And that my faith is firm and pure,
Tho' I left her behind me:
Then Hymen's sacred bonds shall chain
My heart to her fair bosom;
There, while my being does remain,
My love more fresh shall blossom."]

Johnnie's grey Breeks.

THOUGH this has certainly every evidence of being a Scottish air, yet there is a well-known tune and song in the North of Ireland, called "The Weaver and his Shuttle, O," which, though sung much quicker, is every note the very tune.

[Burns, when a lad, wrote verses to the same tune, beginning, "My father was a Farmer upon the Carrick border." The older set of verses, which Johnson, from an unaccountable fastidiousness, had rejected, are not destitute of merit. These artless strains are still sung in Scotland, at every country fire-side, and it now becomes a matter of justice to restore them:—

WHEN I was in my se'enteenth year,
I was baith blythe and bonnie, O;
The lads lo'ed me baith far and near,
But I lo'ed none but Johnnie, O.
He gain'd my heart in twa three weeks,
He spak sae blythe and kindly, O;
And I made him new grey breeks,
That fitted him maist finely, O.

He was a handsome fellow;
His humour was baith frank and free;
His bonny locks sae yellow,
Like gowd they glitter'd in my ee;
His dimpl'd chin and rosy cheeks,
And face sae fair and ruddy, O;
And then a-day his grey breeks,
Were neither auld nor duddy, O.

But now they are threadbare worn,
They're wider than they wont to be;
They're a' tash'd-like, and unco torn,
And clouted sair on ilka knee.
But gin I had a simmer's day,
As I hae had right mony, O,
I'd make a web o' new grey,
To be breeks to my Johnnie, O.

For he's weel worthy o' them,
And better than I hae to gie;
But I'll take pains upo' them,
And strive frae fau'ts to keep them free.
To cleed him weel shall be my care,
And please him a' my study, O;
But he maun wear the auld pair,
Awee, tho' they be duddy, O.]

The happy Marriage.

ANOTHER, but very pretty, Anglo-Scottish piece.

We subjoin the whole of this charming lyric.

How blest has my time been, what joys have I known,
Since wedlock's soft bondage made Jessy my own;
So joyful my heart is, so easy my chain,
That freedom is tasteless, and roving a pain.

Thro' walks grown with woodbines, as often we stray,
Around us our boys and girls frolic and play:
How pleasing their sport is! the wanton ones see,
And borrow their looks from my Jessy and me.

To try her sweet temper, oft-times am I seen,
In revels all day with the nymphs on the green;
Though painful my absence, my doubts she beguiles,
And meets me at night with complaisance and smiles.

What tho' on her cheeks the rose loses its hue,
Her wit and her humour bloom all the year thro';
Time still, as he flies, adds increase to her truth,
And gives to her mind what he steals from her youth.

Ye shepherds so gay, who make love to ensnare,
And cheat with false vows the too credulous fair,
In search of true pleasure how vainly you roam!
To hold it for life, you must find it at home.

[The above elegant song was written by Edward Moore, author of "Fables for the Female Sex," &c. In it the author exhibits not only a charming picture of real domestic happiness, but has likewise paid a delicate compliment to the amiable virtues of his wife. This lady, whose maiden name was Janet Hamilton, had a great turn for poetry, and assisted her husband in writing his tragedy of "The Gamester." One specimen of her poetry was handed about before their marriage, and afterwards appeared in "The Gentleman's Magazine" for 1749. It was addressed to a daughter of the famous Stephen Duck, and begins with the following stanza:—

You will think it, my Duck, for the fault I must own,
Your Jessy, at last, is quite covetous grown;
Though millions, if fortune should lavishly pour,
I still should be wretched, if I had not More.

After playing on his name, with great delicacy and ingenuity, through half-a-dozen stanzas, she thus concludes:

You will wonder, my girl, who this dear one can be,
Whose merit can boast such a conquest as me;
But you sha'n't know his name, though I told you before
It begins with an M; but I dare not say More.]

The Lass of Patie's Mill.

In Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, this song is localized (a verb I must use for want of another to express my idea) somewhere in the north of Scotland, and likewise is claimed by Ayr-shire. The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it from the last John Earl of Loudon. The then Earl of Loudon, and father to Earl John before-mentioned, had Ramsay at Loudon, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, near New Mills, at a place called Patie's Mill, they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His lordship observed that she would be a fine theme for a song. Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudon Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.

["The 'Lass of Patie's Mill' is one of the happiest of all Ramsay's songs. The poet said in his preface to the 'Tea-Table Miscellany,' that he had omitted in his collection all songs liable to raise a blush on the cheek of beauty: this fine lyric has been pointed out as likely to do what he desired to shun, but with how little reason, these verses will prove."—Cunningham.

The lass of Patie's mill,
So bonny, blyth, and gay
In spite of all my skill,
Hath stole my heart away.
When tedding of the hay,
Bare-headed on the green,
Love midst her locks did play,
And wanton'd in her een.

Her arms white, round, and smooth,
Breasts rising in their dawn,
To age it would give youth,
To press them with his hand:
Thro' all my spirits ran
An ecstacy of bliss,
When I such sweetness fand,
Wrapt in a balmy kiss.

Without the help of art,
Like flow'rs which grace the wild,
She did her sweets impart,
Whene'er she spoke or smil'd.
Her looks they were so mild,
Free from affected pride,
She me to love beguil'd:
I wish'd her for my bride

O! had I all that wealth
Hopetoun's high mountains fill,
Insur'd long life and health,
And pleasure at my will,

I'd promise and fulfil,
That none but bonny she,
The lass o' Patie's Mill,
Should share the same wi' me.

The heroine of this fine song was the only daughter of John Anderson, Esq., of Patie's Mill, in the parish of Keith-Hall, and county of Aberdeen.]

The Turnimspike.*

THERE is a stanza of this excellent song for local humour, omitted in this set,—where I have placed the asterims.

"They tak te horse then by te head,
And tere tey mak her stan', man;
Me tell tem, me hae seen te day
Tey no had sic comman', man."

[A highlander laments, in a half-serious and half-comic way, the privations which the act of parliament anent kilts has made him endure, and the miseries which turnpike roads and toll-bars have brought upon his country:—

"HERSELL pe highland shentleman,
Pe auld as Pothwell Prig, man;
And mony alterations seen
Amang te lawland whig, man.

First when her to the lawlands came,
Nainsell was driving cows, man;
There was nae laws about him's nerse,
About the preeks or trews, man.

Nainsell did wear the philabeg,
The plaid prick't on her shoulder;
The guid claymore hung pe her pelt,
De pistol sharg'd wi' pouder.

But for whereas these cursed preeks,
Wherewith her nerse be lockit,
O hon! that e'er she saw the day!
For a' her houghs be prokit.

Every ting in de highlands now
Pe turn'd to alteration;
The sodger dwall at our door-sheek,
And tat's te great vexation.

Scotland be turn't a Ningland now,
An' laws pring on de cadger;
Nainsell wad durk him for his deeds,
But oh! she fear te sodger.

Anither law came after that,
Me never saw te like, man;
They mak a lang road on te crund,
And ca' him *Turnimspike*, man.

An' wow! she pe a pouny road,
Like louden corn-rigs, man;
Where twa carts may gang on her,
An' no preak ithers' legs, man.

They sharge a penny for ilka horse,
In troth she'll no be sheaper,
For nought put gaen upo' the ground,
An' they gi'e me a paper.

Nae doubts, himsell maun tra her purse,
And pay them what hims like, man;
I'll see a shugement on his toor;
That filthy Turnimspike, man.

But I'll awa to te Highland hills,
Where te'il a ane dare turn her,
And no come near your Turnimspike,
Unless it pe to purn her."]

Highland Laddie.

As this was a favourite theme with our later Scottish muses, there are several airs and songs of that name. That which I take to be the oldest is to be found in the "Musical Museum," beginning "I hae been at Crookieden." One reason for my thinking so is that Oswald has it in his collection by the name of "The auld Highland Laddie." It is also known by the name of "Jinglan Johnnie," which is a well-known song of four or five stanzas, and seems to be an earlier song than Jacobite times. As a proof of this, it is little known to the peasantry by the name of "Highland Laddie;" while every body knows "Jinglan Johnnie." The song begins

"Jinglan John, the meickle man
He met wi' a lass was blythe and bonnie."

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* [Burns says nothing about the authorship of this humorous song; but we may mention that it, and its counterpart, "John Hielandman's remarks on Glasgow," are from the pen of Dougald Graham, Bellman in Glasgow, and author of the facetious histories of "Lothian Tam," "Leper the Tailor," "Simple John and his Twelve Misfortunes," "Jocky and Maggy's Courtship," "John Cheap the Chapman," "The Comical sayings of Paddy from Cork with his Coat buttoned behind," "John Falkirk's Carritches," "Janet Clinker's Orations in the Society of Clashin' Wives," and a "Metrical History of the Rebellion in 1745," in which he had a personal share, &c. His works, in the form of Penny Histories, have long formed staple articles in the hawker s basket; and, while the classic presses of Paisley, Stirling, and Falkirk, have groaned with them, the sides of the Scottish lieges have been convulsed with them, for the greater part of a century. —MOTHERWELL.

Graham was born about 1724, and died in the year 1779. His "History of the Rebellion," 1745, was a favourite work of Sir Walter Scott, and was first printed under the following quaint title:—

A full, particular, and true account of the Rebellion in 1745-6.
Composed by the Poet, D. GRAHAM.
In Stirling-shire he lives at hame.
To the tune of *The gallant Grahams*, &c., Glasgow, 1746.]

Another "Highland Laddie" is also in the "Museum," vol. v., which I take to be Ramsay's original, as he has borrowed the chorus—"O my bonnie Highland lad," &c. It consists of three stanzas, besides the chorus; and has humour in its composition—it is an excellent but somewhat licentious * song.—It begins

"As I cam o'er Cairney-Mount,
And down amang the blooming heather,
[Kindly stood the milking-shiel,
To shelter frae the stormy weather.

O my bonnie Highland lad,
My winsome, weel-far'd Highland laddie;
Wha wad mind the wind and rain,
Sae weel row'd in his tartan plaidie?

Now Phœbus blinkit on the bent, [ing;
And o'er the knowes the lambs were bleat-
But he wan my heart's consent
To be his ain at the neist meeting.

O my bonnie Highland lad,
My winsome, weel-far'd Highland laddie;
Wha wad mind the wind and rain,
Sae weel row'd in his tartan plaidie?"]

This air, and the common "Highland Laddie," seem only to be different sets.

Another "Highland Laddie," also in the "Museum," vol. v., is the tune of several Jacobite fragments. One of these old songs to it only exists, as far as I know, in these four lines:—

"WHARE hae ye been a' day,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie?
Down the back o' Bell's brae,
Courtin' Maggie, courtin' Maggie."

Another of this name is Dr. Arne's beautiful air, called the new "Highland Laddie."

[The following *morçeau* was found in a memorandum-book belonging to Burns:

THE HIGHLANDER'S PRAYER, AT SHERRIFF-MUIR.

"O Lord, be thou with us; but, if thou be *not* with us, be not against us; *but leave it between the red coats and us!*"]

The Gentle Swain.

To sing such a beautiful air to such execrable verses is downright prostitution of common sense! The Scots verses indeed are tolerable.

[The Scottish Version was written by Mr. Mayne, who likewise composed some beautiful verses to the tune of "Logan Water." It commences thus:—

JEANNY'S heart was frank and free,
And wooers she had mony yet,
Her sang was aye I fa' I see
Commend me to my Johnnie yet.
For air and late, he has sic a gate
To mak a body cheery, that
I wish to be, before I die,
His ain kind dearie yet.]

He stole my tender Heart away.

THIS is an Anglo-Scottish production, but by no means a bad one.

[The following is a specimen:—

"THE fields were green, the hills were gay,
And birds were singing on each spray,
When Colin met me in the grove,
And told me tender tales of love.
Was ever swain so blythe as he,
So kind, so faithful, and so free?
In spite of all my friends could say,
Young Colin stole my heart away."]

Fairest of the Fair.

IT is too barefaced to take Dr. Percy's charming song, and, by means of transposing a few English words into Scots, to offer to pass it for a Scots song.—I was not acquainted with the Editor until the first volume was nearly finished, else, had I known in time, I would have prevented such an impudent absurdity.

[The verses of Percy are very beautiful—the following is a complete copy:—

I.

"O NANCY, wilt thou go with me,
Nor sigh to leave the flaunting town?
Can silent glens have charms for thee,
The lowly cot and russet gown?
No longer drest in silken sheen,
No longer deck'd with jewels rare,
Say, canst thou quit each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

* [Burns is here too fastidious. We cannot, for the life of us, see any thing licentious in this sweet song, and we have accordingly given the whole of it.]

II.

O Nancy, when thou'rt far away,
Wilt thou not cast a wish behind?
Say, canst thou face the parching ray,
Nor shrink before the wintry wind?
O can that soft and gentle mien
Extremes of hardship learn to bear;
Nor, sad, regret each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

III.

O Nancy! canst thou love so true,
Through perils keen with me to go,
Or when thy swain mishap shall rue,
To share with him the pang of woe?
Say, should disease or pain befal,
Wilt thou assume the nurse's care,
Nor wistful those gay scenes recal
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

IV.

And when at last thy love shall die,
Wilt thou receive his parting breath?
Wilt thou repress each struggling sigh,
And cheer with smiles the bed of death?
And wilt thou o'er his breathless clay
Strew flowers, and drop the tender tear,
Nor then regret those scenes so gay
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

This very lovely song is the composition of Bishop Percy, the well-known Editor of the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, a man who has done more for English Literature than any other half-dozen antiquaries, and one who had the finest taste and the truest feeling for poetry. "This," writes Burns, "is perhaps the most beautiful ballad in the English language."]

The Blaithrie o't.*

THE following is a set of this song, which was the earliest song I remember to have got by heart. When a child, an old woman sung it to me, and I picked it up, every word, at first hearing.

'O WILLY weel I mind, I lent you my hand
To sing you a song which you did me command;
But my memory 's so bad, I had almost forgot
That you call'd it the gear and the blaithrie o't.

I'll not sing about confusion, delusion, nor pride,
I'll sing about a laddie was for a virtuous bride;
For virtue is an ornament that time will never rot,
And preferable to gear and the blaithrie o't.—

Tho' my lassie hae nae scarlets nor silks to put on,
We envy not the greatest that sits upon the throne; [smock,
I wad rather hae my lassie, tho' she cam in her
Than a princess wi' the gear and the blaithrie o't.—

Tho' we hae nae horses nor menzie† at command, [hand;
We will toil on our foot, and we'll work wi' our
And when wearied without rest, we'll find it sweet in any spot,
And we'll value not the gear & the blaithrie o't.

If we hae ony babies, we'll count them as lent;
Hae we less, hae we mair, we will aye be content; [but a groat
For they say they hae mair pleasure that wins
Than the miser wi' his gear and the blaithrie o't.

I'll not meddle wi' th' affairs o' the kirk or the queen; [let them swim;
They're nae matters for a sang, let them sink,
On your kirk I'll ne'er encroach, but I'll hold it still remote,
Sae tak this for the gear and the blaithrie o't."

May Ebe, or Kate of Aberdeen.

"KATE of Aberdeen" is, I believe, the work of poor Cunningham the player; of whom the following anecdote, though told before, deserves a recital. A fat dignitary of the church coming past Cunningham one *Sunday*, as the poor poet was busy plying a fishing-rod in some stream near Durham, his native country, his reverence reprimanded Cunningham very severely for such an occupation on such a day. The poor poet, with that inoffensive gentleness of manners which was his peculiar characteristic, replied, that he hoped God and his reverence would forgive his seeming profanity of that sacred day, "*as he had no dinner to eat, but what lay at the bottom of that pool!*" This, Mr. Woods, the player, who knew Cunningham well, and esteemed him much, assured me was true.

["Cunningham was a native of Dublin; an indifferent actor, a very pretty poet, and a very worthy man. He was unaffected in his manners, and quite a simpleton, as the following anecdote will shew. His volume of poems was

* ["*Shame fall the gear and the blaithry o't,*" is the tune of an old Scottish song, spoken when a young handsome girl marries an old man, upon the account of his wealth.—*Kelly's Scots Proverbs, p.* 296.]

† [*Menzie.*—Retinue—Followers.]

dedicated to Garrick, whom in his admiration of theatrical talent he naturally esteemed the first man that ever existed. He trudged up to the metropolis to present his volume to this celebrated character. He saw him; and, according to his own phrase, he was treated by him *in the most humiliating and scurvy manner imaginable.* Garrick assumed a cold and stately air; insulted Cunningham by behaving to him as to a common beggar, and gave him a couple of guineas, accompanied with this *speech*:—'*Players, Sir,* as well as *Poets, are always poor.*'

"The blow was too severe for the poet. He was so confused at the time that he had not the use of his faculties, and indeed never recollected that he ought to have spurned the offer with contempt, till his best friend, Mrs. Slack, of Newcastle, reminded him of it by giving him a sound box on the ear."—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

His fine song of "Kate of Aberdeen" is as follows:—

"THE silver moon's enamour'd beam
Steals softly through the night,
To wanton with the winding stream,
And kiss reflected light.
To beds of state go balmy sleep,
Where you've so seldom been,
Whilst I May's wakeful vigils keep
With Kate of Aberdeen!

The nymphs and swains, expectant, wait,
In primrose chaplets gay,
Till morn unbars her golden gate,
And gives the promis'd May.
The nymphs and swains shall all declare
The promis'd May, when seen,
Not half so fragrant, half so fair,
As Kate of Aberdeen!

I'll tune my pipe to playful notes,
And rouse yon nodding grove;
Till new-wak'd birds distend their throats,
And hail the maid I love.
At her approach, the lark mistakes,
And quits the new-dress'd green:
Fond bird! 'tis not the morning breaks;
Tis Kate of Aberdeen!

Now blithesome o'er the dewy mead,
Where elves disportive play;
The festal dance young shepherds lead,
Or sing their love-tun'd lay.
Till May, in morning robe, draws nigh,
And claims a Virgin Queen;
The nymphs and swains, exulting, cry,
Here's Kate of Aberdeen!"]

Tweed Side.

IN Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, he tells us that about thirty of the songs in that publication were the works of some young gentlemen of his acquaintance; which songs are marked with the letters D. C. &c.—Old Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, the worthy and able defender of the beauteous Queen of Scots, told me that the songs marked C, in the *Tea-table*, were the composition of a Mr. Crawford, of the house of Achnames, who was afterwards unfortunately drowned coming from France.—As Tytler was most intimately acquainted with Allan Ramsay, I think the anecdote may be depended on. Of consequence, the beautiful Song of Tweed Side is Mr. Crawford's, and indeed does great honour to his poetical talents. He was a Robert Crawford; the Mary he celebrates was a Mary Stewart, of the Castle-Milk family,* afterwards married to a Mr. John Ritchie.

I have seen a song, calling itself the original Tweed Side, and said to have been composed by a Lord Yester. It consisted of two stanzas, of which I still recollect the first—

"WHEN Maggy and I was acquaint,
I carried my noddle fu' high;
Nae lintwhite on a' the green plain,
Nor gowdspink, sae happy as me:
But I saw her sae fair, and I lo'ed:
I woo'd, but I cam nae great speed;
So now I maun wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.†

[Crawford's song is still popular, as well it deserves to be:—

* [If the reader refers to the note to the Flower of Yarrow, he will there find that Sir Walter Scott states this song to have been written in honour of another lady, a Miss Mary Lilias Scott. In a copy of Cromek's Reliques of Burns there is the following note on this passage in Sir Walter Scott's hand-writing: "Miss Mary Lilias Scott was the eldest daughter of John Scott, of Harden, and well known, in the fashionable world, by the nick-name of *Cadie* Scott, I believe, because she went to a masqued ball in such a disguise. I remember her, an old lady, distinguished for elegant manners and high spirit, though struggling under the disadvantages of a narrow income, as her father's estate, being entailed on heirs male, went to another branch of the Harden family, then called the High Chester family. I have heard an hundred times, from those who lived at the period, that Tweedside, and the song called Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, were both written upon this much admired lady, and could add much proof on the subject, did space permit."—WALTER SCOTT.]

† [The following is the other stanza:—

To Maggy my love I did tell,
Saut tears did my passion express;
Alas! for I lo'ed her o'er well,
And the women lo'e sic a man less.
Her heart it was frozen and cauld,
Her pride had my ruin decreed;
Therefore I will wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

John, Lord Yester, second Marquis of Tweeddale, died in 1713. He possessed considerable poetic abilities.]

I.

WHAT beauties doth Flora disclose!
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed!
Yet Mary's, still sweeter than those,
Both nature and fancy exceed.
Nor daisy, nor sweet blushing rose,
Nor all the gay flowers of the field,
Nor Tweed gliding gently through those,
Such beauty and pleasure do yield.

II.

The warblers are heard in the grove,
The linnet, the lark, and the thrush,
The blackbird, and sweet cooing dove,
With music enchant every bush.
Come, let us go forth to the mead,
Let us see how the primroses spring,
We'll lodge in some village on Tweed,
And love while the feather'd folks sing.

III.

How does my love pass the long day?
Does Mary not 'tend a few sheep?
Do they never carelessly stray,
While happily she lies asleep?
Tweed's murmurs should lull her to rest,
Kind nature indulging my bliss,
To ease the soft pains of my breast,
I'd steal an ambrosial kiss.

IV.

'Tis she does the virgin excel,
No beauty with her may compare;
Love's graces around her do dwell,
She's fairest, where thousands are fair.
Say, charmer, where do thy flock stray?
Oh! tell me at noon where they feed;
Is it on the sweet wending Tay,
Or pleasanter banks of the Tweed?]

The Posie.

IT appears evident to me that Oswald composed his *Roslin Castle* on the modulation of this air.*—In the second part of Oswald's, in the three first bars, he has either hit on a wonderful similarity to, or else he has entirely borrowed, the three first bars of the old air; and the close of both tunes is almost exactly the same. The old verses to which it was sung, when I took down the notes from a country girl's voice, had no great merit.—The following is a specimen:—

THERE was a pretty May, † and a milkin' she went;
Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal black hair;
And she has met a young man a comin o'er the bent,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

O where are ye goin', my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal black hair?
Unto the yowes a milkin', kind sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

What if I gang alang wi' thee, my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal black hair;
Wad I be aught the warse o' that, kind sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

Mary's Dream.

THE Mary here alluded to is generally supposed to be Miss Mary Macghie, daughter to the Laird of Airds, in Galloway. The Poet was a Mr. John Lowe,‡ who likewise wrote ano-

* [We have already stated that Oswald was *not* the composer of Roslin Castle.]

† [*May*.—Maid—Young Woman.]

‡ ["Lowe was born at Kenmore in Galloway, in the year 1750. He was the eldest of a numerous family, and, after receiving the education common to the Scottish peasantry, was appointed to the occupation of a weaver. He however found means afterwards to obtain a regular education, in the course of prosecuting which he was employed as tutor in the family of Mr. M'Ghie of Airds. A young gentleman of the name of Miller, who had been engaged to Mary, one of Mr. M'Ghie's daughters, was at this period unfortunately lost at sea, which called forth Mr. Lowe's powers in that beautiful song, 'Mary, weep no more for me,' which alone makes his history an object of interest to the public.

"His views were directed to the church; but seeing no prospect of a living, he determined to try his fortune in America, and for that country he embarked, in the year 1773, being invited as tutor to the family of a brother of General Washington. From this circumstance, he seems to have cherished hopes which were never realized. He kept for some time an academy for young gentlemen, in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and at length took orders in the Episcopal Church, obtained a living, and became eminently respectable for his talents, his learning, and his sociable and pleasant manners. An event, however, soon took place, which clouded the meridian of his life, and blasted his happiness for ever.

"While in the family of Airds he had become engaged to a sister of Mary, whom he has immortalized by his song, and, after he had been two years in America, he wrote to her in the most impassioned strains. He soon afterwards, however, became enamoured of a beautiful Virginian lady, and forgot his first love on the banks of the Ken. The lady, however, was deaf to all his addresses, and he had the mortification to see her bestowed on a more fortunate and deserving lover. At the same time, a sister of this lady became passionately fond of him; and, in a moment of silly chagrin, he allowed himself to be united to her, merely, he said, from a principle of gratitude. Every propitious planet hid its head at the hour that made them one. She proved every thing that was bad: and Lowe soon saw in his wife an abandoned woman, totally regardless of his happiness, and unfaithful even to his bed. Overwhelmed with disappointment and shame, he had recourse to the miserable expedient of dissipating, or attempting to dissipate, at the bottle, the cares and chagrin that preyed upon his heart. Habits of intemperance were thus formed, which, with their usual attendants, poverty and disease, brought him to an untimely grave, in the 48th year of his age.

"The circumstances attending his death, as described by one of his friends, were truly distressing. "Perceiving his end drawing near, and wishing to die in peace, away from his own wretched walls, he mounted a sorry palfrey, and rode some distance to the house of a friend. So much was he debilitated that scarcely could he alight in the court and walk into the house. Afterwards he revived a little, and en-

ther beautiful song, called Pompey's Ghost.—I have seen a poetic epistle from him in North America, where he now is, or lately was, to a lady in Scotland.—By the strain of the verses, it appeared that they allude to some love affair.

[Lowe's exquisite song of Mary's dream will do for his name what neither the Epistle, nor Pompey's Ghost, would of themselves accomplish. The following is a faithful transcript:—

"THE moon had climb'd the highest hill,
Which rises o'er the source of Dee,
And from the eastern summit shed
Her silver light on tow'r and tree:
When Mary laid her down to sleep,
Her thoughts on Sandy far at sea;
When soft and low a voice was heard,
Saying, 'Mary, weep no more for me!'

She from her pillow gently rais'd
Her head, to ask who there might be;
She saw young Sandy shivering stand,
With visage pale and hollow e'e:
O, Mary dear! cold is my clay,
It lies beneath a stormy sea;
Far, far from thee, I sleep in death,—
So, Mary, weep no more for me!

Three stormy nights and stormy days
We toss'd upon the raging main,
And long we strove our bark to save,
But all our striving was in vain.
Even then, when horror chill'd my blood,
My heart was fill'd with love for thee:
The storm is past, and I at rest,
So, Mary, weep no more for me!

O maiden dear, thyself prepare,
We soon shall meet upon that shore
Where love is free from doubt and care,
And thou and I shall part no more.
Loud crow'd the cock, the shadow fled,
No more of Sandy could she see;
But soft the passing Spirit said,
'Sweet Mary, weep no more for me!'"]

The Maid that tends the Goats.

BY MR. DUDGEON.

THIS Dudgeon is a respectable farmer's son in Berwick-shire.

[The song has an original air about it, which is very pleasing:—

I.

UP amang yon cliffy rocks,
Sweetly rings the rising echo,
To the maid that tends the goats,
Lilting o'er her native notes.
Hark, she sings, Young Sandie's kind,
And he's promis'd ay' to lo'e me,
Here's a brooch, I ne'er shall tine,
Till he's fairly marri'd to me.
Drive away, ye drone time,
And bring about our bridal day.

II.

Sandy herds a flock o' sheep,
Aften does he blaw the whistle,
In a strain sae vastly sweet,
Lam'ies list'ning dare na bleat,
He's as fleet 's the mountain roe,
Hardy as the highland heather,
Wading through the winter snow,
Keeping aye his flock together;
But wi' plaid, and bare houghs,
He braves the bleakest northern blast.

III.

Brawly he can dance and sing,
Canty glee or Highland cronach:
Nane can ever match his fling,
At a reel, or round a ring;
Wightly can he wield a rung,
In a brawl he's aye the baughter;
A' his praise can ne'er be sung
By the langest winded sangster.
Sangs that sing o' Sandy,
Seem short, tho' they were e'er sae lang.]

I wish my Love were in a Mire.

I NEVER heard more of the words of this old song than the title.

[The old song commenced with these characteristic words:—

"I WISH my love were in a mire,
That I might pu' her out again."

The verses in the Museum are in a different

joyed some hours of that vivacity which was peculiar to him. But this was but the last faint gleam of a setting sun: on the third day after his arrival at the house of his friend he breathed his last. He now lies buried near Fredericksburg, Virginia, under the shade of two palm trees, but not a stone is there on which to write 'Mary, weep no more for me.'"

The abandoned woman, to whom he had so foolishly linked his fortune, made no inquiry after him for more than a month, when she sent for his horse, which had been previously sold to defray the expenses of his funeral.

Lowe was in his person very handsome. His figure was active, well proportioned, and rather above the middle size. His hair was auburn, his eyes blue, and penetrating, his nose aquiline, and the whole expression of his countenance open and benevolent. These qualities, united to a lively and insinuating manner, made him a favourite with the fair sex. He was, however, in love, 'more susceptible than constant; and one act of infidelity will, by some, be supposed to have been sufficiently punished by the subsequent misfortunes of his life.'

N.B. His first love on the banks of the Ken was, after his death, married to a respectable country gentleman, and was alive in 1810."]

strain: they are a translation from Sappho, by Ambrose Phillips:—

"Blest as the immortal gods is he,
The youth who fondly sits by thee;
And hears and sees thee all the while,
So softly speak, and sweetly smile.

'Twas this bereav'd my soul of rest,
And rais'd such tumults in my breast,
For while I gaz'd, in transport toss'd,
My breath was gone, my voice was lost.

My bosom glow'd, the subtle flame
Ran quick thro' all my vital frame;
O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung,
My ears with hollow murmurs rung.

In dewy damps my limbs were chill'd;
My blood with gentle horrors thrill'd;
My feeble pulse forgot to play:
I fainted—sunk—and died away."]

Allan Water.

This Allan Water, which the composer of the music has honoured with the name of the air, I have been told is Allan Water, in Strathallan.

[To Robert Crawford, of Auchnames, we are indebted for this beautiful song:—

I.

"What numbers shall the muse repeat,
What verse be found to praise my Annie;
On her ten thousand graces wait,
Each swain admires and owns she's bonnie.
Since first she strode the happy plain,
She set each youthful heart on fire;
Each nymph does to her swain complain,
That Annie kindles new desire.

II.

This lovely, darling, dearest care,
This new delight, this charming Annie,
Like summer's dawn she's fresh and fair,
When Flora's fragrant breezes fan ye.
All day the am'rous youths convene,
Joyous they sport and play before her;
All night, when she no more is seen,
In joyful dreams they still adore her.

III.

Among the crowd Amyntor came,
He look'd, he lov'd, he bow'd to Annie;
His rising sighs express his flame,
His words were few, his wishes many.
With smiles the lovely maid reply'd,
Kind shepherd, why should I deceive ye?
Alas! your love must be deny'd,
This destin'd breast can ne'er relieve ye.

IV.

Young Damon came with Cupid's art,
His wiles, his smiles, his charms beguiling;
He stole away my virgin heart;
Cease, poor Amyntor! cease bewailing.
Some brighter beauty you may find;
On yonder plain the nymphs are many;
Then choose some heart that's unconfin'd,
And leave to Damon his own Annie.]

There's nae Luck about the House.

This is one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots, or any other, language.—The two lines,

"And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak!"

as well as the two preceding ones, are unequalled almost by anything I ever heard or read; and the lines,

"The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw,"—

are worthy of the first poet. It is long posterior to Ramsay's days. About the year 1771, or 72, it came first on the streets as a ballad; and I suppose the composition of the song was not much anterior to that period.

[The author of this inimitable ballad was William Julius Mickle, Esq., a native of Langholm, and well known as the elegant translator of the "Luciad, and other Poems." He was born in 1734, and died in 1788. As the first sketch of so beautiful a song is both curious and interesting, we subjoin a copy taken from the original MS. in the author's own handwriting:—

There's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house,
When our guidman's awa.

And are you sure the news is true;
And do you say he 's weel?
Is this a time to speak of wark?
Ye jades, lay by your wheel!
Is this a time to spin a thread,
When Colin's at the door?
Reach me my cloak, I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore.

And gie to me my bigonet,
My bishop's satin gown,
For I maun tell the baillie's wife
That Colin's in the town.
My turken slippers maun gae on,
My stockings pearly blue;
'Tis a' to pleasure my guidman,
For he's baith leal and true.

Rise, lass, and mak a clean fire-side,
Put on the muckle pot;
Gie little Kate her button gown,
And Jock his Sunday coat;
And mak their shoon as black as slaes,
Their hose as white as snaw;
'Tis a' to pleasure my guidman,
For he's been lang awa'.

There's twa fat hens upo' the coop,
Been fed this month and mair;
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare;
And mak the table neat and trim;
Let every thing be braw;
For who kens how my Colin far'd
When he was far awa'.

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like caller air,
His very foot hath music in't,
As he comes up the stair.
And shall I see his face again,
And shall I hear him speak?
I'm downright giddy wi' the thought,
In truth I'm like to greet.

If Colin's weel, and weel content,
I hae nae mair to crave;
And gin I live to mak him sae,
I'm blest aboon the lave.
And shall I see his face again, &c.]

[The song is indeed a fine one; but one of the best verses was the work of Dr. Beattie.

Sae true his words, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like caller air,
His very foot has music in't
When he comes up the stair;
And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak!
I'm downright dizzy with the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet.]

Tarry Woo.

This is a very pretty song; but I fancy that the first half-stanza, as well as the tune itself, are much older than the rest of the words.

[The first half stanza of the old version of Tarry Woo is as follows:—

O tarry woo is ill to spin,
Card it weel e'er ye begin;
Card it weel and draw it sma',
Tarry woo's the best of a'.

Cromek remarks that the thought contained in these two lines;—

"Who'd be a king can ony tell,
When a shepherd sings sae well?"

Is an imitation of a verse in a fine old song, "The Miller," which serves to confirm the truth of Burns's observation on the age of "Tarry Woo." We subjoin a couple of stanzas of the modern version:—

Up, ye shepherds, dance and skip,
O'er the hills and valleys trip,
Sing up the praise of tarry woo',
Sing the flocks that bear it too.
Harmless creatures without blame,
That cleed the back, and cram the wame,
Keep us warm and hearty fou;
Leese me on the tarry woo.

How happy is the shepherd's life,
Far frae courts, and free of strife,
While the gimmers bleat and bae,
And the lambkins answer "*Mae:*"
No such music to his ear;
Of thief or fox he has no fear:
Sturdy Kent, and colly true,
We'll defend the tarry woo.]

Gramachree.

The song of Gramachree was composed by Mr. Poe, a counsellor at law in Dublin. This anecdote I had from a gentleman who knew the lady, the "Molly," who is the subject of the song, and to whom Mr. Poe sent the first manuscript of his most beautiful verses. I do not remember any single line that has more true pathos than

"How can she break the honest heart that wears her in its core!"

But as the song is Irish, it had nothing to do in this collection.

[The following are the words of this exquisite song, so eulogized by the Poet:—

As down on Banna's banks I stray'd,
One evening in May,
The little birds in blithest notes
Made vocal every spray:
They sang their little notes of love;
They sang them o'er and o'er,
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.

The daisy pied, and all the sweets
The dawn of nature yields;
The primrose pale, the vi'let blue,
Lay scatter'd o'er the fields;
Such fragrance in the bosom lies
Of her whom I adore,
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.

I laid me down upon a bank,
Bewailing my sad fate,
That doom'd me thus the slave of love,
And cruel Molly's hate.
How can she break the honest heart
That wears her in its core!
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.

You said you lov'd me, Molly dear;
Ah! why did I believe?
Yes, who could think such tender words
Were meant but to deceive?
That love was all I ask'd on earth,
Nay Heav'n could give no more,
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.

Oh! had I all the flocks that graze,
On yonder yellow hill;
Or low'd for me the num'rous herds,
That yon green pastures fill;
With her I love I'd gladly share
My kine and fleecy store,
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.

Two turtle doves above my head,
Sat courting on a bough;
I envy'd them their happiness,
To see them bill and coo;
Such fondness once for me she shew'd,
But now, alas! 'tis o'er;
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.

Then fare thee well, my Molly dear,
Thy loss I still shall moan;
Whilst life remains in Strephon's heart,
'Twill beat for thee alone.
Tho' thou art false, may Heav'n on thee
Its choicest blessings pour!
Ah! gramachree, mo challie nouge,
Mo Molly Astore.]

The Collier's bonnie Lassie.

THE first half stanza is much older than the days of Ramsay.—The old words began thus:

"THE collier has a dochter, and, O, she's wonder bonnie; [lands and money.
A laird he was that sought her, rich baith in
She wad nae hae a laird, nor wad she be a lady; [daddie."—
But she wad hae a collier, the colour o' her

[The verses in Johnson's Museum are pretty; Allan Ramsay's songs have always nature to recommend them:—

I.

"THE Collier has a daughter,
And O, she's wonder bonny!
A laird he was that sought her,
Rich baith in land and money.
The tutors watch'd the motion
Of this young honest lover,
But love is like the ocean;
Wha can its deeps discover?

II.

He had the heart to please ye
And was by a' respected,
His airs sat round him easy,
Genteel, but unaffected.
The Collier's bonnie lassie,
Fair as the new blown lillie,
Aye sweet and never saucy,
Secur'd the heart of Willie.

III.

He lov'd, beyond expression,
The charms that were about her,
And panted for possession,
His life was dull without her.
After mature resolving,
Close to his breast he held her,
In saftest flames dissolving,
He tenderly thus tell'd her—

IV.

'My bonnie Collier's daughter
Let naething discompose ye,
'Tis no your scanty tocher
Shall ever gar me lose ye:
For I have gear in plenty,
And love says 'tis my duty
To ware what heaven has lent me,
Upon your wit and beauty.'"]

My ain kind Dearie, O.

THE old words of this song are omitted here, though much more beautiful than these inserted; which were mostly composed by poor Fergusson, in one of his merry humours. The old words began thus:

"I'LL rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O,
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wat,
And I were ne'er sae weary, O;
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.—"

[The verses of Fergusson are as follow:—

"NAE herds wi' kent, and collie there,
Shall ever come to fear ye, O,
But lav'rocks whistling in the air,
Shall woo, like me, their dearie, O!

While others herd their lambs and ewes,
And toil for world's gear, my jo,

Upon the lee my pleasure grows,
Wi' you, my kind dearie O!

Will ye gang o'er the lea rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!
And cuddle there sae kindly wi' me,
My kind dearie, O!

At thorny dike, and birkin tree,
We'll daff, and ne'er be weary, O!
They'll sing ill e'en frae you and me,
Mine ain kind dearie, O!

Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow.*

Mr. Robertson, in his statistical account of the parish of Selkirk, says, that Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, was descended from the Dryhope, and married into the Harden, family. Her daughter was married to a predecessor of the present Sir Francis Elliot, of Stobbs, and of the late Lord Heathfield.

There is a circumstance in their contract of marriage that merits attention, and it strongly marks the predatory spirit of the times. The father-in-law agrees to keep his daughter for some time after the marriage; for which the son-in-law binds himself to give him the profits of the first Michaelmas moon.†

Allan Ramsay's version is as follows:—

I.

Happy's the love which meets return,
When in soft flame souls equal burn;
But words are wanting to discover
The torments of a hapless lover.
Ye registers of heaven, relate,
If looking o'er the rolls of fate,
Did you there see me mark'd to marrow,
Mary Scott, the flow'r of Yarrow?

II.

Ah, no! her form's too heav'nly fair,
Her love the gods alone must share;
While mortals with despair explore her,
And at a distance due adore her.
O, lovely maid! my doubts beguile,
Revive and bless me with a smile:
Alas, if not, you'll soon debar a'
Sighing swain on the banks of Yarrow.

III.

Be hush, ye fears, I'll not despair,
My Mary's tender as she's fair;
Then I'll go tell her all mine anguish,
She is too good to let me languish;
With success crown'd, I'll not envy
The folks who dwell above the sky;
When Mary Scott's become my marrow,
We'll make a paradise of Yarrow.

[" Near the lower extremity of St. Mary's Lake (a beautiful sheet of water, forming the reservoir from which the Yarrow takes its source), are the ruins of Dryhope tower, the birth-place of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow. She was married to Walter Scott, of Harden, no less renowned for his depredations, than his bride for her beauty. Her romantic appellation was, in latter days, with equal justice, conferred on Miss Mary Lilias Scott, the last of the elder branch of the Harden family. I well remember the talent and spirit of the latter Flower of Yarrow, though age had then injured the charms which procured her the name: and that the words usually sung to the air of 'Tweed-Side,' beginning,

'What beauties doth Flora disclose,'

were composed in her honour."—Sir Walter Scott—*Notes to Marmion—Second Canto.*

In the copy of 'Cromek's Reliques,' previously referred to, is the following note by Sir Walter Scott:—" I may add, for the satisfaction of the ingenious and pains-taking illustrator, that the facts could not but be well-known to me as living in the closest intimacy with the Harden family, and being descended from their eldest cadet, Scott of Raeburn."]

Down the Burn, Davie.

I have been informed that the tune of "Down the Burn, Davie," was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of the blood slough hounds, belonging to the Laird of Riddel, in Tweeddale.

[Honest David has made us his debtor for a very pretty air: the words are by William Crawford. Burns tried, but very unsuccessfully, to diminish the warmth of this tender song.

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* MARY SCOTT.

Traditionary Set.

Mary's red and Mary's white,
And Mary she's the king's delight,
The king's delight and the prince's marrow,
Mary Scott, the flower of Yarrow.

When I look east my heart grows sair,
But when I look west it's mair and mair,
And when I look to the banks o' Yarrow,
I mind me o' my winsome marrow.

Now she's gone to Edinbro' town
To buy braw ribbons to tie her gown,
She's bought them braid and laid them narrow,
Mary Scott 's the flower o' Yarrow.

† [The time when the moss-troopers and cattle-drivers on the borders began of yore their nightly depredations.]

"When trees did bud, and fields were green,
And broom bloom'd fair to see;
When Mary was complete fifteen,
And love laugh'd in her e'e;
Blythe Davie's blinks her heart did move,
To speak her mind thus free,
'Gang down the burn, Davie, love,
And I shall follow thee.'

Now Davie did each lad surpass
That dwalt on yon burn side,
And Mary was the bonniest lass,
Just meet to be a bride;
Her cheeks were rosy, red and white,
Her een were bonnie blue;
Her looks were like Aurora bright,
Her lips like dropping dew.

As down the burn they took their way,
What tender tales they said!
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And with her bosom play'd;
Till baith at length impatient grown,
To be mair fully blest,
In yonder vale they lean'd them down—
Love only saw the rest.

What pass'd, I guess, was harmless play,
And naething sure unmeet;
For ganging hame, I heard them say,
They lik'd a walk sae sweet;
And that they aften should return
Sic pleasure to renew.
Quoth Mary, 'Love, I like the burn,
And aye shall follow you.'"]

Blink o'er the Burn, sweet Bettie.*

THE old words, all that I remember, are,—

"BLINK over the burn, sweet Betty,
It is a cauld winter night;
It rains, it hails, it thunders,
The moon she gies nae light:
It's a' for the sake o' sweet Betty,
That ever I tint my way;
Sweet, let me lie beyond thee
Until it be break o' day.—

O, Betty will bake my bread,
And Betty will brew my ale,
And Betty will be my love,
When I come over the dale;
Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me,
And while I hae life, dear lassie,
My ain sweet Betty thou's be."

The blithesome Bridal.

I FIND the "Blithesome Bridal" in James Watson's collection of Scots Poems printed at Edinburgh, in 1706. This collection, the publisher says, is the first of its nature which has been published in our own native Scots dialect —it is now extremely scarce.†

[The inimitable "Blithesome Bridal" is rather too long for quotation; and who would venture to describe it? There is singular ease of expression and great force of graphic delineation. The witty catalogue of guests, and the humorous list of dinner dishes, are only equalled by Smollett's entertainment in the manner of the ancients. There is a maritime savour about the feast, which inclines one to think that it was spread somewhere on the sea-coast. For the guests take the following verses:—

COME, fye, let us a' to the wedding,
For there will be lilting there,
For Jock will be married to Maggie,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.
And there will be lang kail and castocks,
And bannocks o' barley-meal;

* [The old set of the words are these:

I.

IN summer I mawed my meadow,
In hairst I shure the corn,
In winter I married a widow,
I wish she were dead the morn.

CHORUS.

Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me;
I would gie a' I had in the warld
But to be a widow for thee.

II.

The youth he was wamplin' and wandy,
The lassie was quite fu' o' glee;
And aye, as she cried to the laddie,
Come down bonny Tweed-side to me.

III.

Come meet me again ne'er to sever,
Come meet me where naebody can see,
I canna think ye're a deceiver,
And mean but to lichtlie me.

"Come o'er the bourn, Betty, to me;
Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak,
Why she dares not come over to thee."

Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me;
I would gie a' I had in the warld,
But to be a widow for thee.

This must also have been an English song.—See Lear, Act 3, Scene vi.]

† ["There is a tradition in our country that Sir William Scott, of Thirlstane, was the author of this inimitably droll song, and that he once sung it at an assembly in London. The English nobility were so tickled by it that they requested to hear it again; but Scott, feeling that it would not bear explanations, respectfully declined complying. They sent a deputation of young ladies to him, who kneeled and begged to have the song over again; but he was obliged to remain obstinate. I asked Lord Napier if he knew this song to be his predecessor's? He doubted it, and thought that a copy of it having been found inserted among some of that knight's own compositions had given rise to the tradition."—THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

"The author was Francis Sempill of Beltrees."—MOTHERWELL.]

And there will be guid saut herring,
To relish a cog o' guid ale.

And there will be Sandy the sutor,
And Will wi' the meikle mou,
And there will be Tam the blutter,
With Andrew the tinkler, I trow;
And there will be bow-legg'd Robie,
With thumbless Katie's gudeman,
And there will be blue cheek'd Dobbie,
And Laurie, the laird of the land.

And there will be sow-libber Patie,
And plookie-fac'd Wat i' the mill;
Capper-nos'd Francis and Gibbie,
That wons i' the howe o' the hill;
And there will be Alister Sibbie,
Wha in wi' black Bessie did mool,
With snivelling Lilie and Tibbie,
The lass that stands aft on the stool.

The dishes were not unworthy of the bridal party—

And there will be fadges and brochan,
Wi' routh o' gude gabbocks o' skate;
Powsowdie and drammock and crowdie,
And caller nowt feet on a plate;
And there will be partans and buckies,
And whitings and speldings anew;
With singed sheep heads and a haggis,
And scadlips to sup till ye spew.

And there will be lapper'd milk kebbuck,
And sowens, and carles, and laps;
With swats and well-scraped paunches,
And brandy in stoups and in caps;
And there will be meal-kail and porrage,
Wi' skirk to sup till ye reve,
And roasts to roast on a brander,
Of flewks that were taken alive.

Scrapt haddocks, wilks, dulse, and tangle,
And a mill o' guid snishing to prie,
When weary wi' eating and drinking,
We'll rise up and dance till we die;
Then fie let 's a' to the bridal,
For there will be lilting there,
For Jock 'll be married to Maggie,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.

The authorship of this hearty old Scottish song has been claimed by the noble family of Napier for an ancestor who lived upon the border.

Lord Napier himself, in a letter to Mark Napier, dated Thirlestane, Dec. 15, 1831, says, "Sir William Scott was the author of that well known Scots song, 'Fye, let us a' to the bridal'—a better thing than Horace ever wrote. *My authority was my father.* Sir William Scott died in 1725.]

John Hay's bonnie Lassie.

JOHN HAY'S "Bonnie Lassie" was daughter of John Hay, Earl or Marquis of Tweeddale, and the late Countess Dowager of Roxburgh. She died at Broomlands, near Kelso, some time between the years 1720 and 1740.

[The heroine of the song had store of charms, if we may put faith in the Muse:

"SHE'S fresh as the spring, and sweet as Aurora,
When birds mount and sing, bidding day a good-morrow;
The sward o' the mead, enamelled wi' daisies,
Look wither'd and dead when twinn'd of her graces.
But if she appear where verdures invite her,
The fountains run clear, and flow'rs smell the sweeter;
'Tis heaven to be by when her wit is a flowing,
Her smiles and bright een set my spirits a glowing."

We may accept this as a picture of one of the noble beauties of the north a hundred years ago.]

The bonnie brucket Lassie.

THE first two lines of this song are all of it that is old. The rest of the song, as well as those songs in the "Museum" marked T., are the works of an obscure, tippling, but extraordinary body of the name of Tytler, commonly known by the name of Balloon Tytler,* from

* ["James Tytler was the son of a country clergyman in the presbytery of Brechin, and brother to Dr. Tytler, the translator of Callimachus. He was instructed by his father in classical learning and school divinity, and attained an accurate knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and an extensive acquaintance with biblical literature and scholastic theology. Having discovered an early predilection for the medical profession, he was put apprentice to a surgeon in Forfar, and afterwards sent to attend the medical classes at Edinburgh. While a medical student, he cultivated experimental chemistry and controversial theology with equal assiduity. Unfortunately his religious opinions, not deemed orthodox, or Calvinistical, connected him with a society of Glassites, and involved him in a marriage with a member of that society, which terminated in a separation. He now settled in Leith, as an apothecary, depending on the patronage of his religious connections; but his separation from the society, which happened soon after, with an unsteadiness that was natural to him, disappointed his expectations. When he ceased to be a Glassite he ceased not to be a firm believer in the Christian revelation, and a zealous advocate of genuine Christianity; but he never afterwards held communion with any denomination of Christians. The neglect of his business was the unavoidable consequence of his attention to religious dissensions; and having contracted debts to a considerable amount, he was obliged to remove to Berwick, and afterwards to Newcastle. In both places he was employed in preparing chemical medicines for the druggists; but the liberality of his employers being insufficient to preserve an increasing family from the evils of penury, he returned to Edinburgh, in the year 1772, in extreme poverty, and took refuge from the molestation of his creditors within the precincts of the sanctuary of Holyrood House, where debtors are privileged from arrests. At this period his wife

his having projected a balloon: a mortal, who, though he drudges about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, a sky-lighted hat, and knee-buckles as unlike as George-by-the-grace-of-God, and Solomon-the-son-of-David; yet that same unknown drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of Elliot's pompous Encyclopedia Britannica, which he composed at half-a-guinea a week!

[The following verses will enable the reader to judge of the merits of Balloon Tytler:—

"THE bonnie brucket lassie,
She's blue beneath the e'en;
She was the fairest lassie
That danc'd on the green:
A lad he lo'ed her dearly,
She did his love return;
But he his vows has broken,
And left her for to mourn.

'My shape,' says she, 'was handsome,
My face was fair and clean;
But now I'm bonnie brucket,
And blue beneath the een:
My eyes were bright and sparkling,
Before that they turn'd blue;
But now they're dull with weeping,
And a', my love, for you.

O could I live in darkness,
Or hide me in the sea,
Since my love is unfaithful,
And has forsaken me.
No other love I suffer'd
Within my breast to dwell;
In nought have I offended,
But loving him too well.'

Her lover heard her mourning,
As by he chanc'd to pass;
And press'd unto his bosom
The lovely brucket lass.
'My dear,' said he, 'cease grieving,
Since that your love is true,
My bonny brucket lassie,
I'll faithful prove to you."]

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deserted him and their five children, the youngest only six months old, and returned to her relations. He solaced himself for the privation of domestic happiness by composing a humorous ballad, entitled 'The Pleasures of the Abbey,' which was his first attempt in poetry. In a description of its inhabitants, the author himself is introduced in the 16th and 17th stanzas. In the avocation of an author by profession, which he was now compelled to assume, he displayed a versatility of talent, and a facility in writing, unexampled in the transactions of the press. He commenced his literary career by a publication entitled 'Essays on the most important Subjects of natural and revealed Religion,' which issued from the asylum of debtors under the peculiar circumstances of being composed, by himself, at the printing case, from his own conceptions, without a manuscript before him, and wrought off at a press of his own construction, by his own hands. He left this singular work, which was to be completed in two volumes, 8vo., unfinished, and turned aside, to attack the opinions of a new religious sect, called the Bereans, in 'A Letter to Mr. John Barclay on the Doctrine of Assurance,'—in which he again performed the functions of author, compositor, and pressman. He next sent forth, with such assistance as he could find, a monthly publication, entitled 'The Gentleman and Lady's Magazine,' which was soon abandoned for 'The Weekly Review,'—a literary miscellany which, in its turn, was discontinued in a very short time. These publications, unavoidably disfigured with many typographical deformities, made him known to the booksellers; and from them he afterwards found constant employment in compilations, abridgments, translations, and miscellaneous essays. He now ventured to leave the miserable apartments which he had long occupied in the sanctuary for debtors, for more comfortable lodgings, first at Restalrig, and afterwards in the city; and, if his prudence and steadiness had been equal to his talents and industry, he might have earned by his labours a complete maintenance, which never fell to his lot. As he wrote for subsistence, not from the vanity of authorship, he was engaged in many works which were anonymous, and in others which appeared with the names of his employers. He is editor, or author, of the following works: 'The Weekly Mirror,' a periodical publication which began in 1780; 'A System of Geography,' in 8vo.; 'A History of Edinburgh,' 12mo.; 'A Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar,' 2 vols., 8vo.; 'A Review of Dritchken's Theory of Inflammation,' 12mo., with a practical dedication; 'Remarks on Mr. Pinkerton's Introduction to the History of Scotland,' 8vo.; 'A Poetical Translation of Virgil's Eclogues,' 4to.; 'A general Index to the Scots Magazine;' 'A System of Chemistry,' written at the expense of a gentleman who was to put his name to it, unpublished. He gave his assistance in preparing the System of Anatomy published by A. Bell, and was an occasional contributor to the 'Medical Commentaries,' and other periodical publications of the time. He was the principal editor of the 2nd edition of the 'Encyclopedia Britannica,' and finished, with incredible labour, a large proportion of the more considerable scientific treatises and histories, and almost all the minor articles. He had an apartment assigned him in the printing-house, where he performed the offices of compiler and corrector of the press at a salary of *sixteen shillings a week!* When the third edition was undertaken, he was engaged as a stated contributor, upon more liberal terms, and wrote a larger share in the early volumes than is ascribed to him in the general preface. It was his misfortune to be continually drawn aside from the business of his employers by the delight he took in prosecuting experiments in chemistry, electricity, and mechanics, which consumed a large portion of his time and money. He conducted for some time, with success, a manufacturing process, of which he was the inventor; but after he had disclosed his secret to the gentleman at whose expense it was carried on, he was dismissed, without obtaining either a share in the business, or a suitable compensation for his services. He was the first in Scotland who adventured in a fire-balloon, constructed upon the plan of Montgolfier. He ascended from Comely Garden, Edinburgh, amidst the acclamations of an immense multitude, and descended at a distance of a quarter of a mile, owing to some unforeseen defect in the machinery. The failure of this adventure deprived him of the public favour and applause, and increased his pecuniary difficulties. He again had recourse to his pen for subsistence, and, amidst the drudgery of writing, and the cares which pressed upon him daily, he exhilarated his spirits, at intervals, with a tune on the Irish Bagpipe, which he played with much sweetness, interposing occasionally a song of his own composition, sung with great animation. A solace of this kind was well suited to the simplicity of his manners, the modesty of his disposition, and the integrity of his character, such as they were before he suffered his social propensities to violate the rules of sobriety. Forgetting his old friends, he associated with discontented persons, and entered into a deliberate exposition of the abuses of government in 'A Pamphlet on the Excise,' and more systematically in a periodical publication, entitled 'The Historical Register,' which gratified malignity by personal invective and intemperance of language. He was concerned in the wild irrational plans of the British convention, and published 'A Handbill addressed to the People,' written in so inflammatory a style as rendered him obnoxious to government. A warrant was issued to apprehend him, and he left his native country and crossed the Atlantic for America, where he fixed his residence in the town of Salem in the state of Massachusetts, where he established a newspaper in connection with a printer, which he continued till his death, which happened in the year 1805, in the 58th year of his age."—CROMEK.]

Sae merry as we Twa ha'e been.

THIS song is beautiful.—The chorus in particular is truly pathetic. I never could learn any thing of its author.

CHORUS.

"SAE merry as we twa ha'e been,
Sae merry as we twa ha'e been;
My heart it is like for to break,
When I think on the days we ha'e seen."

[We owe this song to the industry of Herd: the first line of the chorus gave the name to the air two hundred years ago.

"A lass that was laden with care
Sat heavily under a thorn;
I listen'd awhile for to hear,
When thus she began for to mourn:
Whene'er my dear shepherd was there,
The birds did melodiously sing,
And cold nipping winter did wear
A face that resembled the spring.

Our flocks feeding close by his side,
He gently pressing my hand,
I view'd the wide world in its pride,
And laugh'd at the pomp of command.
'My dear,' he would oft to me say,
'What makes you hard-hearted to me?
Oh! why do you thus turn away
From him who is dying for thee?'

But now he is far from my sight,
Perhaps a deceiver may prove,
Which makes me lament day and night,
That ever I granted my love.
At eve, when the rest of the folk
Were merrily seated to spin,
I set myself under an oak,
And heavily sighed for him."]

The Banks of Forth.

THIS air is Oswald's.

["Here's anither—it's no a Scots tune, but it passes for ane—Oswald made it himsel, I reckon. He has cheated mony a ane, but he canna cheat Wandering Willie."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The song in the Museum is a charming one:—

YE sylvan powers that rule the plain,
When sweetly winding Fortha glides,
Conduct me to those banks again,
Since there my charming Mary bides.

Those banks that breathe their vernal sweets,
Where ev'ry smiling beauty meets;
Where Mary's charms adorn the plain,
And cheer the heart of ev'ry swain.

Oft in the thick embow'ring groves,
Where birds their music chirp aloud,
Alternately we sung our loves,
And Fortha's fair meanders view'd.

The meadows wore a gen'ral smile,
Love was our banquet all the while;
The lovely prospect charm'd the eye,
To where the ocean met the sky.

Once on the grassy bank reclin'd
Where Forth ran by in murmurs deep,
It was my happy chance to find
The charming Mary lull'd asleep;

My heart then leap'd with inward bliss,
I softly stoop'd, and stole a kiss;
She wak'd, she blush'd, and gently blam'd,
'Why, Damon! are you not asham'd?'

Ye sylvan pow'rs, ye rural gods,
To whom we swains our cares impart,
Restore me to those blest abodes,
And ease, oh! ease my love-sick heart!

Those happy days again restore,
When Mary and I shall part no more;
When she shall fill these longing arms,
And crown my bliss with all her charms."]

The Bush aboon Traquair.

THIS is another beautiful song of Mr. Crawford's composition. In the neighbourhood of Traquair, tradition still shews the old "Bush;" which, when I saw it in the year 1787, was composed of eight or nine ragged birches. The Earl of Traquair has planted a clump of trees near by, which he calls "The new Bush."

[Crawford's songs were long and justly popular: "The Bush aboon Traquair" is still a favourite.

"HEAR me, ye nymphs, and every swain,
I'll tell how Peggy grieves me;
Tho' thus I languish and complain,
Alas! she ne'er believes me.
My vows and sighs, like silent air,
Unheeded never move her;
The bonny bush aboon Traquair,
Was where I first did love her.

That day she smil'd and made me glad,
No maid seem'd ever kinder;
I thought mysel' the luckiest lad,
So sweetly there to find her.

I tri'd to sooth my am'rous flame
In words that I thought tender;
If more there pass'd, I'm not to blame,
I meant not to offend her."

Yet now she scornful flees the plain,
The fields we then frequented;
If e'er we meet, she shows disdain,
She looks as ne'er acquainted.
The bonny bush bloom'd fair in May,
Its sweets I'll aye remember;
But now her frowns make it decay;
It fades as in December.

Ye rural pow'rs, who hear my strains,
Why thus should Peggy grieve me?
Oh! make her partner in my pains;
Then let her smiles relieve me.
If not, my love will turn despair,
My passion no more tender;
I'll leave the bush aboon Traquair,
To lonely wilds I'll wander.

"The Bush aboon Traquair," "The Broom o' the Cowden-knowes;" "The Birks of Aberfeldy," and "The Birks of Invermay," continue to supply the curious with snuff-boxes and drinking-cups.]

Cromlet's Lilt.

The following interesting account of this plaintive dirge was communicated to Mr. Riddel by Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee.

"In the latter end of the 16th century, the Chisholms were proprietors of the estate of Cromlecks (now possessed by the Drummonds). The eldest son of that family was very much attached to the daughter of Stirling of Ardoch, commonly known by the name of Fair Helen of Ardoch.

"At that time the opportunities of meeting between the sexes were more rare, consequently more sought after than now; and the Scottish ladies, far from priding themselves on extensive literature, were thought sufficiently book-learned if they could make out the Scriptures in their mother tongue. Writing was entirely out of the line of female education. At that period the most of our young men of family sought a fortune, or found a grave in France. Cromleck, when he went abroad to the war, was obliged to leave the management of his correspondence with his mistress to a lay-brother of the monastery of Dumblain, in the immediate neighbourhood of Cromleck, and near Ardoch. This man, unfortunately, was deeply sensible of Helen's charms. He artfully prepossessed her with stories to the disadvantage of Cromleck; and, by misinterpreting or keeping up the letters and messages intrusted to his care, he entirely irritated both. All connexion was broken off betwixt them: Helen was inconsolable, and Cromleck has left behind him, in the ballad called 'Cromlet's Lilt,' a proof of the elegance of his genius, as well as the steadiness of his love.

"When the artful monk thought time had sufficiently softened Helen's sorrow, he proposed himself as a lover: Helen was obdurate; but at last, overcome by the persuasions of her brother, with whom she lived, and who, having a family of thirty-one children, was probably very well pleased to get her off his hands—she submitted rather than consented to the ceremony; but there her compliance ended; and, when forcibly put into bed, she started quite frantic from it, screaming out, that after three gentle raps on the wainscot, at the bed-head, she heard Cromleck's voice, crying, 'O Helen, Helen, mind me!' Cromleck soon after coming home, the treachery of the confident was discovered — her marriage annulled — and Helen became Lady Cromleck."

N.B. Marg. Murray, mother to these thirty-one children, was daughter of Murray of Strewn, one of the seventeen sons of Tullybardine, and whose youngest son, commonly called the Tutor of Ardoch, died in the year 1715, aged 111 years.

[The proper name of this ancient Scottish song is "Cromleck's Lilt."

The following is a complete copy of this affecting ballad, as given in the Museum:—

CROMLECK'S LILT.

I.

"Since all thy vows, false maid,
Are blown to air
And my poor heart betray'd
To sad despair,
Into some wilderness,
My grief I will express,
And thy hard-heartedness,
O cruel fair!

II.

Have I not graven our loves
On even tree,
In yonder spreading groves,
Tho' false thou be:
Was not a solemn oath
Plighted betwixt us both—
Thou thy faith, I my troth,
Constant to be.

III.

Some gloomy place I'll find,
Some doleful shade,
Where neither sun nor wind
E'er entrance had:

Into that hollow cave,
There will I sigh and rave,
Because thou dost behave
So faithlessly.

IV.

Wild fruit shall be my meat,
I'll drink the spring,
Cold earth shall be my seat;
For covering,
I'll have the starry sky
My head to canopy,
Until my soul on high
Shall spread its wing.

V.

I'll have no funeral fire,
Nor tears for me;
No grave do I desire
Nor obsequie.
The courteous red-breast he
With leaves will cover me,
And sing my elegy,
With doleful voice

VI.

And when a ghost I am
I'll visit thee,
O thou deceitful dame,
Whose cruelty
Has killed the fondest heart
That e'er felt Cupid's dart,
And never can desert
From loving thee.]

My Dearie, if thou die.

ANOTHER beautiful song of Crawford's.

[Who the Peggy was of whose charms Crawford sung so sweetly, no one has told us.

"LOVE never more shall give me pain,
My fancy's fix'd on thee,
Nor ever maid my heart shall gain,
My Peggy, if thou die.
Thy beauty doth such pleasure give,
Thy love's so true to me,
Without thee I can never live,
My dearie, if thou die.

If fate shall tear thee from my breast,
How shall I lonely stray?
In dreary dreams the night I'll waste,
In sighs, the silent day.
I ne'er can so much virtue find,
Nor such perfection see;
Then I'll renounce all woman-kind,
My Peggy, after thee.

No new-blown beauty fires my heart,
With Cupid's raving rage;
But thine, which can such sweets impart,
Must all the world engage.
'Twas this that like the morning sun,
Gave joy and life to me;
And when its destin'd day is done,
With Peggy let me die.

Ye pow'rs, that smile on virtuous love,
And in such pleasure share;
You who its faithful flames approve,
With pity view the fair:
Restore my Peggy's wonted charms,
Those charms so dear to me!
Oh! never rob them from these arms!
I'm lost if Peggy die."]

She rose and let me in.†

THE old set of this song, which is still to be found in printed collections, is much prettier than this; but somebody, I believe it was Ramsay,‡ took it into his head to clear it of some seeming indelicacies, and made it at once more chaste and more dull.

[The version in the Museum is as follows:—

"THE night her silent sables wore
And gloomy were the skies,
Of glittering stars appear'd no more
Than those in Nelly's eyes.
When to her father's door I came,
Where I had often been,
I begg'd my fair, my lovely dame,
To rise and let me in.

But she, with accents all divine,
Did my fond suit reprove,
And while she chid my rash design,
She but inflam'd my love.

* [These four lines evidently refer to the fine old ballad—"The Babes in the Wood," which must have been written in the time of James VI. The corresponding lines in the old ballad being:—

No burial those pretty babes
Of any man receives,
But Robin red-breast painfully
Did cover them with leaves.]

† [Francis Sempill of Belltrees was the author of this song. He was a grandson of Sir James Sempill, the ambassador to Queen Elizabeth, in the reign of James VI. The Sempills were a poetical family for three generations.]

["This is an *English* song of great merit, and has been *Scotified* by the Scots themselves."—RITSON.]

‡ [No, no; it was not Ramsay. The song still remains in his Tea-Table Miscellany, and the Orpheus Caledonius, and even in Herd's Collection, in its primitive state of indelicacy. The verses in the Museum were re-touched by an able and masterly hand, who has thus presented us with a song at once chaste and elegant, in which all the energetic force and beauty of the original are preserved, without a single idea to crimson the cheek of modesty, or to cause one pang to the innocent and feeling heart.—STENHOUSE.]

Her beauty oft had pleas'd before,
While her bright eyes did roll;
But virtue only had the pow'r
To charm my very soul.

These who would cruelly deceive,
Or from such beauty part!
I lov'd her so, I could not leave
The charmer of my heart.
My eager fondness I obey'd,
Resolv'd she should be mine,
Till Hymen to my arms convey'd
My treasure so divine.

Now happy in my Nelly's love,
Transporting is my joy,
No greater blessing can I prove,
So blest a man am I.
For beauty may a while retain,
The conquer'd flatt'ring mart,
But virtue only is the chain
Holds, never to depart.

The following verses, after the first stanza, are given by Allan Cunningham:—

"Fast lock'd within my close embrace,
She, trembling, stood asham'd—
Her swelling breast, and glowing face,
And every touch inflam'd,
With look and accents all divine
She did my warmth reprove,—
The more she spoke, the more she look'd,
The warmer wax'd my love.

Then, then, beyond expressing,
Transporting was the joy!
I knew no greater blessing,
So blest a man was I.
And she, all ravish'd with delight,
Bid me oft come again,
And kindly vow'd that every night
She'd rise and let me in.

Fu' soon, soon I return'd again
When stars were streaming free:
Oh! slowly, slowly came she down
And stood and gaz'd on me:
Her lovely eyes with tears ran o'er,
Repenting her rash sin—
And aye she mourn'd the fatal hour
She rose and loot me in.

But who could cruelly deceive,
Or from such beauty part?
I lov'd her so, I could not leave
The charmer of my heart:
We wedded, and I thought me blest,
Such loveliness to win;
And now she thanks the happy hour
She rose to loot me in."]

Will ye go to the Ewe-Bughts,* Marion?

I AM not sure if this old and charming air be of the South, as is commonly said, or of the North of Scotland. There is a song apparently as ancient as "Ewe-bughts, Marion," which sings to the same time, and is evidently of the North—it begins thus:—

THE Lord o' Gordon had three dochters,
Mary, Marget, and Jean,
They wad na stay at bonnie Castle Gordon,
But awa to Aberdeen.

[The lover begins his courtship in a way very simple and effective.

Will ye go to the ewe-bughts, Marion,
And wear in the sheep wi' me?
The sun shines sweet, my Marion,
But nae half sae sweet as thee.

O Marion's a bonnie lass,
And the blyth blinks in her e'e;
And fain wad I marry Marion,
Gin Marion wad marry me.]

Lewis Gordon.

THIS air is a proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed,—

"Tune of Tarry Woo—"

of which tune a different set has insensibly varied into a different air.—To a Scots critic, the pathos of the line,

"Tho' his back be at the wa',"

Must be very striking. It needs not a Jacobite prejudice to be affected with this song.

The supposed author of "Lewis Gordon" was a Mr. Geddes, priest, at Shenval, in the Ainzie.

OH! send Lewie Gordon hame,
And the lad I maunna name;
Tho' his back be at the wa',
Here's to him that's far awa'!
Oh hon! my Highland man!
Oh, my bonny Highland man;
Weel would I my true-love ken,
Amang ten thousand Highland men.

---

* [Sheep-folds.]

O! to see his tartan trews,
Bonnet blue, and laigh-heel'd shoes;
Philabeg aboon his knee;
That's the lad that I'll gang wi'!
Oh hon! &c.

The princely youth, that I do mean,
Is fitted for to be king,
On his breast he wears a star;
You'd take him for the god of war.
Oh hon! &c.

O! to see this princely one,
Seated on a royal throne!
Disasters a' would disappear,
Then begins the Jub'lee year!
Oh hon! &c.

Lord Lewis Gordon, younger brother to the Duke of Gordon, commanded a detachment for the Young Chevalier, in the affair of 1745-6, and acquitted himself with great gallantry and judgment. He died in 1754.]

The Wauking o' the Fauld.

THERE are two stanzas still sung to this tune, which I take to be the original song whence Ramsay composed his beautiful song of that name in the Gentle Shepherd. It begins

"O will ye speak at our town,
As ye come frae the fauld, &c."

I regret that, as in many of our old songs, the delicacy of this old fragment is not equal to its wit and humour.*

[The version of Allan Ramsay is as follows:—

MY Peggie is a young thing,
Just enter'd in her teens;
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
Fair as the day, and always gay.
My Peggie is a young thing,
And I'm not very auld;
Yet well I like to meet her at
The wauking o' the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
Whene'er we meet alane;
I wish nae mair to lay my care,
I wish nae mair of a' that's rare.
My Peggie speaks sae sweetly,
To a' the lave I'm cauld;
But she gars a' my spirits glow,
At wauking o' the fauld.

My Peggie smiles sae kindly,
Whene'er I whisper love,
That I look down on a' the town,
That I look down upon a crown.
My Peggie smiles sae kindly,
It makes me blythe and bauld;
And naething gies me sic delight
As wauking o' the fauld.

My Peggie sings sae saftly,
When on my pipe I play;
By a' the rest it is confess'd,
By a' the rest, that she sings best:
My Peggy sings sae saftly,
And in her sangs are tauld,
With innocence, the wale o' sense,
At wauking o' the fauld.]

Oh ono Chrio.†

DR. Blacklock informed me that this song was composed on the infamous massacre of Glencoe.‡

[OH! was not I a weary wight!
Maid, wife, and widow, in one night!
When in my soft and yielding arms,
O! when most I thought him free from harms.
Even at the dead time of the night,
They broke my bower, and slew my knight.
With ae lock of his jet black hair,
I'll tye my heart for evermair;
Nae sly-tongu'd youth, nor flatt'ring swain,
Shall e'er untie this knot again;
Thine still, dear youth, that heart shall be,
Nor pant for aught, save heaven and thee.]

I'll never leave thee.

THIS is another of Crawford's songs, but I do not think in his happiest manner. What an absurdity to join such names as *Adonis* and *Mary* together!

* [There is a far older set of this song than this which Burns speaks of; it is perfectly modest, though not very poetical. The first stanza runs thus:—

COME all ye jolly shepherds
That lo'e the tarry woo,
Wha lo'e to wait upon the sheep:
An' tak delight the lambs to keep,
I'll tell ye how I met my love,
Upon an e'ening cauld,
When it was late, an' growing dark,
As I drew nigh the fauld.]

† [A vitiated pronunciation of "*Ochoin och rie,*" a Gaelic exclamation, generally expressive of deep sorrow and affliction, similar to that of *Oh! my heart!*]

‡ [For a particular account of this atrocious butchery, see Smollett, and other historians. It happened in 1691. Thirty-eight innocent and unsuspecting persons, including the chief of the clan, were inhumanly massacred in their beds, by a military party under Campbell of Glenlyon. Neither age, youth, nor sex, were spared in the dreadful carnage, and many, who escaped instant death, afterwards perished in the mountains, from the inclemency of the weather, from hunger, and fatigue.]

[One day I heard Mary say
How shall I leave thee,
Stay, dearest Adonis, stay,
Why wilt thou grieve me ?]

Corn-Rigs are bonnie.

All the old words that ever I could meet to this air were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus :—

O corn-rigs and rye-rigs,
O corn-rigs are bonnie ;
And where'er you meet a bonnie lass,
Preen up her cockernony.

[Ramsay wrote this song for the Gentle Shepherd.

My Patie is a lover gay,
His mind is never muddy :
His breath is sweeter than new hay,
His face is fair and ruddy.
His shape is handsome, middle size ;
He's stately in his walking ;
The shining o' his e'en surprise ;
'Tis heaven to hear him talking.

Last night I met him on the bawk,
Where yellow corn was growing ;
There mony a kindly word he spak,
That set my heart a-glowing.
He kiss'd, and vow'd he wad be mine,
And lo'ed me best of ony ;
That gars me like to sing sinsyne
" O corn-rigs are bonnie !"

Let maidens of a silly mind
Refuse what maist they're wanting ·
Since we for yielding are design'd,
We chastely should be granting :
Then I'll comply, and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony,
He's free to touzle, air or late,
Where corn-rigs are bonnie.

Scraps of curious old song are scattered over all Scotland : here is a fragment concerning Corn-Rigs :—

" There was a piper had a cow,
An' he had nought to gie her ;
He took his pipes and play'd a tune,
And bade the cow consider.
The cow consider'd very well,
And gae the piper a penny
To play the same tune owre again,
Corn-rigs are bonnie."]

The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre.

The chorus of this song is old ; the rest is the work of Balloon Tytler.

[The following copy of a more modern song to this air possesses great humour ; it was written by the late Rev. T. Nicol, Minister of Inverleithing, Peebles-shire :—

Meg, muckin' at Geordie's byre,
Wrought as gin her judgment was wrang ;
Ilk daud o' the scartle strack fire,
While, loud as a lavrock she sang !
Her Geordie had promis'd to marrie,
An' Meg, a sworn fae to despair,
Not dreamin' the job could miscarrie,
Already seem'd mistress an' mair !

My neebours, she sang, aften jeer me,
And ca' me daft, halucket Meg,
An' say, they expect soon to hear me
I' the kirk, for my fun, get a fleg !
An' now 'bout my marriage they clatter,
An' Geordie, poor fallow ! they ca'
An auld doitit hav'rel !—Nae matter,
He'll keep me aye brankin an' braw !

I grant ye, his face is kenspeckle,
That the white o' his e'e is turn'd out,
That his black beard is rough as a heckle,
That his mou' to his lug's rax'd about ;
But they needna let on that he's crazie,
His pike-staff wull ne'er let him fa' ;
Nor that his hair's white as a daisie,
For, fient a hair has he ava !

But a weel-plenish'd mailin' has Geordie,
An' routh o' gude goud in his kist ;
An' if siller comes at my wordie,
His beautie, I never wull miss't !
Daft gouks, wha catch fire like tinder,
Think love-raptures ever wull burn !
But, wi' poortith, hearts het as a cinder
Wull cauld as an iceshogle turn !

There'll just be ae bar to my pleasure,
A bar that's aft fill'd me wi' fear.
He's sic a hard, near-be-gawn miser,
He likes his saul less than his gear !
But tho' I now flatter his failin',
An' swear nought wi' goud can compare,
Gude sooth ! it sall soon get a scailin' !
His bags sall be mouldy nae mair !

I dreamt that I rade in a chariot,
A flunkie ahint me in green ;
While Geordie cry'd out, he was harriet,
An' the saut tear was blindin' his een ;
But tho' 'gainst my spendin' he swear aye,
I'll hae frae him what ser's my turn ;
Let him slip awa whan he grows wearie,
Shame fa' me gin lang I wad mourn !

But Geordie, while Meg was haranguin',
Was cloutin' his breeks i' the bauks,
An' whan a' his failins she brang in,
His strang hazle pike-staff he taks,—

Designin' to rax her a lounder,
He chanc'd on the ladder to shift,
An' down frae the bauks, flat's a flounder,
Flew, like a shot-starn frae the lift!

But Meg wi' the sight was quite haster'd,
An', nae doubt, was bannin' ill luck;
While the face o' poor Geordie was plaster'd,
An' his mou' was fill'd fu' wi' the muck!
Confound ye, cryd Geordie, an' spat out
The glaur that adown his beard ran;—
Preserve us! quo' Meg, as she gat out
The door,—an' thus lost a gudeman!]

Bide ye yet.

THERE is a beautiful song to this tune, beginning,

"Alas, my son, you little know—,"

which is the composition of Miss Jenny Graham, of Dumfries.

[The song which Burns commended is as follows:—

"ALAS! my son, you little know
The sorrows that from wedlock flow;
Farewell to every day of ease,
When you have got a wife to please.

Sae bide ye yet, and bide ye yet,
Ye little ken what's to betide ye yet;
The half of that will gane ye yet,
Gif a wayward wife obtain ye yet.

Your hopes are high, your wisdom small,
Woe has not had you in its thrall;
The black cow on your foot ne'er trod,
Which gars you sing along the road.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.

Sometimes the rock, sometimes the reel,
Or some piece of the spinning-wheel,
She'll drive at you, my bonny chiel,
And send you headlang to the de'il.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.

When I, like you, was young and free,
I valu'd not the proudest she;
Like you, my boast was bold and vain,
That men alone were born to reign.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.

Great Hercules, and Sampson, too,
Were stronger far than I or you;
Yet they were baffled by their dears,
And felt the distaff and the shears.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.

Stout gates of brass, and well-built walls,
Are proof 'gainst swords and cannon-balls;
But nought is found, by sea or land,
That can a wayward wife withstand.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.

The authoress was a maiden lady; she lived to a good old age, and died of an asthma, the pain of which she alleviated in composing humourous Scottish songs. She was a fine dancer in her youth; a young nobleman was so much charmed with her graceful movements, and the music of her feet, that he enquired in what school she was taught. "In my mother's washing-tub," was the answer.—CUNNINGHAM.

In the other pretty little ballad to this tune, there is as rich a vein of lively and innocent humour as is to be found in the whole compass of the Museum:—

GIN I had a wee house, and a canty wee fire,
A bonny wee wifie to praise and admire,
A bonny wee yardie aside a wee burn,
Fareweel to the bodies that yammer and mourn!

Sae bide ye yet, and bide yet,
Ye little ken what may betide ye yet,
Some bonny wee body may be my lot,
And I'll aye be canty wi' thinking o't.

When I gang afield, and come hame at e'en,
I'll get my wee wifie fu' neat and fu' clean,
And a bonnie wee bairnie up on her knee,
That will cry papa, or daddy, to me.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.

And if there should happen ever to be
A diff'rence atween my wee wifie and me,
In hearty good humour, altho' she be teaz'd,
I'll kiss her and clap her until she be pleas'd.

Sae bide ye yet, &c.]

HERE the remarks on the first volume of the Musical Museum conclude: the second volume has the following preface from the pen of Burns:—

"In the first volume of this work, two or three airs, not of Scots composition, have been inadvertently inserted; which, whatever excellence they may have, was improper, as the collection is solely to be the music of our own country. The songs contained in this volume, both music and poetry, are all of them the work of Scotsmen. Wherever the old words could be recovered, they have been preferred: both as suiting better the genius of the tunes, and to preserve the productions of those earlier sons of the Scottish muses, some of whose names deserved a better fate than has befallen them,—

'Buried 'midst the wreck of things which were.' Of our more modern songs, the Editor has inserted the author's names as far as he can ascertain them; and, as that was neglected in the first volume, it is annexed here. If he have made any mistakes in this affair, which he possibly may, he will be very grateful at being set right.

"Ignorance and prejudice may perhaps affect to sneer at the simplicity of the poetry or music of some of these poems; but their having been for ages the favourites of nature's judges --the common people,—was to the Editor a sufficient test of their merit. Edinburgh, March 1, 1788."]

Tranent-Muir.

"TRANENT-MUIR" was composed by a Mr. Skirving, a very worthy, respectable farmer near Haddington.* I have heard the anecdote often, that Lieut. Smith, whom he mentions in the ninth stanza, came to Haddington after the publication of the song, and sent a challenge to Skirving to meet him at Haddington, and answer for the unworthy manner in which he had noticed him in his song. "Gang away back," said the honest farmer, "and tell Mr. Smith that I hae nae leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here, and I'll tak a look o' him, and if he think I'm fit to fecht him, I'll fecht him; and if no, I'll do as he did—*I'll rin awa.*"—

[Stanza ninth, as well as tenth, to which the anecdote refers, shews that the anger of the Lieutenant was any thing but unreasonable.

"And Major Bowle, that worthy soul,
Was brought down to the ground, man;
His horse being shot, it was his lot,
For to get mony a wound, man:
Lieutenant Smith, of Irish birth,
Frae whom he call'd for aid, man,
Being full of dread, lap o'er his head,
And wadna be gainsaid, man!

He made sic haste, sae spurr'd his baist,
'Twas little there he saw, man:
To Berwick rade, and falsely said,
The Scots were rebels a', man;
But let that end, for well 'tis kenn'd,
His use and wont to lie, man;
The teague is naught, he never faught,
When he had room to flee, man."

The song and the story of the challenge went long hand in hand: the latter usually ushered in the former.]

* [Mr. Skirving was tenant of East Garleton, about a mile and a half to the north of Haddington.]

Polwart on the Green.

THE author of "Polwart on the Green" is Capt. John Drummond M'Gregor, of the family of Bochaldie.

[This is one of the songs of which Sir Walter Scott says the authorship ascribed by Burns might be questioned. In the traditions of the muse, Scott will generally be found correct: his decisions were the result of many enquiries, and, as he had a memory which never deceived him, and a sagacity that rarely erred, he may be safely followed in all matters connected with song. Chalmers says, "Polwart on the Green" was written by Allan Ramsay: and in this he is followed by all authorities of any value, with the single exception of Burns. The internal evidence of the song is in favour of Ramsay.

"At Polwart on the green,
If you'll meet me the morn,
Where lasses do conveen
To dance about the thorn,
A kindly welcome ye shall meet
Frae her wha likes to view
A lover and a lad complete—
The lad and lover you.

Let dorty dames say na,
As lang as e'er they please,
Seem caulder than the snaw,
While inwardly they bleeze.
But I will frankly shaw my mind,
And yield my heart to thee;
Be ever to the captive kind
That langs na to be free.

At Polwart on the green,
Amang the new-mown hay,
With sangs and dancing keen,
We'll pass the heartsome day.
At night if beds be o'er thrang laid
And thou be twin'd of thine,
Thou shalt be welcome, my dear lad,
To take a part of mine."

Polwart is a pleasant village, situate near Dunse, in Berwick-shire. In the middle of the village stand two venerable thorns, round which the Polwart maidens, when they became brides, danced with their partners on the day of the bridal.—CUNNINGHAM.]

Strephon and Lydia.

THE following account of this song I had from Dr. Blacklock:—

The Strephon and Lydia mentioned in the

song were perhaps the loveliest couple of their time. The gentleman was commonly known by the name of Beau Gibson. The lady was the "Gentle Jean," celebrated somewhere in Hamilton of Bangour's poems.—Having frequently met at public places, they had formed a reciprocal attachment, which their friends thought dangerous, as their resources were by no means adequate to their tastes and habits of life. To elude the bad consequences of such a connexion, Strephon was sent abroad with a commission, and perished in Admiral Vernon's expedition to Carthagena.

The author of the song was William Wallace, Esq. of Cairnhill, in Ayr-shire.

["ALL lonely on the sultry beach,
Expiring Strephon lay,
No hand the cordial draught to reach,
Nor cheer the gloomy way.
Ill-fated youth! no parent nigh,
To catch thy fleeting breath,
No bride to fix thy swimming eye,
Or smooth the face of death!

Far distant from the mournful scene,
Thy parents sit at ease,
Thy Lydia rifles all the plain,
And all the spring, to please.
Ill-fated youth! by fault of friend,
Not force of foe, depress'd,
Thou fall'st, alas! thyself, thy kind,
Thy country, unredress'd!"]

My Jo, Janet.

[OF THE MUSEUM.]

JOHNSON, the publisher, with a foolish delicacy, refused to insert the last stanza of this humourous ballad.

[The sly humour of Allan Ramsay is visible in this song: it is believed, however, that he only retouched an old song, communicating to the strain some of his own peculiar glee. Johnson, a devout man, shook his head at the figurative language of the last verse.

"O SWEET Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye come by the Bass then,
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a keeking-glass then.
Keek into the draw well,
Janet, Janet;
And there ye'll see your bonny sell,
My jo, Janet.

Keeking in the draw-well clear,
What if I should fa' in then;
Syne a' my kin will say and swear,
I drown'd mysell for sin, then.
Had the better by the brae,
Janet, Janet;
Had the better by the brae,
My jo, Janet.

Good Sir, for your courtesie,
Coming thro' Aberdeen then,
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a pair of sheen then.
Clout the auld, the new are dear,
Janet, Janet;
A pair may gain ye ha'f a year,
My jo, Janet.

But what if dancing on the green,
An' skipping like a maukin,
If they should see my clouted sheen,
Of me they will be tauking.
Dance ay laigh, and late at e'en,
Janet, Janet;
Syne a' their fauts will no be seen,
My jo, Janet.

Kind Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye gae to the cross then,
For the love ye bear to me,
Buy me a pacing horse then.
Pace upo' your spinning wheel,
Janet, Janet;
Pace upo' your spinning wheel,
My jo, Janet.

My spinning wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, Sir;
To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
Employs right aft my hand, Sir.
Make the best o' that ye can,
Janet, Janet;
But like it never wale a man,
My jo, Janet.]

Love is the Cause of my Mourning.

THE words by a Mr. R. Scott, from the town or neighbourhood of Biggar.

[We subjoin the first stanza of this exquisite song:—

BY a murmuring stream a fair shepherdess lay,
Be so kind, O ye nymphs, I oft heard her say,
Tell Strephon I die, if he passes this way,
And love is the cause of my mourning.
False shepherds, that tell me of beauty & charms,
Deceive me, for Strephon's cold heart never warms;
Yet bring me this Strephon, I'll die in his arms;
O Strephon! the cause of my mourning.
But first, said she, let me go
Down to the shades below,
E'er ye let Strephon know
That I have lov'd him so:
Then on my pale cheek no blushes will shew,
That love is the cause of my mourning.]

Fife, and a' the Lands about it.

This song is Dr. Blacklock's. He, as well as I, often gave Johnson verses, trifling enough, perhaps, but they served as a vehicle to the music.

[The words are as follows:—

"Allan by his grief excited,
Long the victim of despair,
Thus deplor'd his passion slighted,
Thus address'd the scornful fair.
'Fife and all the lands about it,
Undesiring I can see;
Joy may crown my days without it,
Not, my charmer, without thee.

Must I then for ever languish,
Still complaining, still endure?
Can her form create an anguish,
Which her soul disdains to cure?
Who by hopeless passion fated,
Must I still those eyes admire,
Whilst unheeded, unregretted,
In her presence I expire?

Would thy charms improve their pow'r?
Timely think, relentless maid;
Beauty is a short-liv'd flower,
Destin'd but to bloom and fade!
Let that Heav'n, whose kind impression
All thy lovely features shew,
Melt thy soul to soft compassion
For a suff'ring lover's woe."

[The air to which this song is written is very old: the old name is supposed to have been "Let Jamie's Lad alane."]

Were na my Heart light I wad die.

Lord Hailes, in the notes to his Collection of ancient Scots poems, says that this song was the composition of Lady Grisel Baillie, daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and wife of George Baillie, of Jerviswood.

[There are few songs superior to this—the last verse has obtained a melancholy importance from being applied by Burns to his own condition, when he found himself neglected by his country, and descending to the grave.

"There was ance a May, and she lo'ed na men,
She biggit her bonny bow'r down in yon glen;
But now she cries dool! and a well-a-day!
Come down the green gate, & come here away.

When bonny young Johnny came o'er the sea,
He said he saw naithing sae lovely as me;
He hecht me baith rings and mony braw things:
And were na my heart light, I wad die.

He had a wee titty that lo'ed na me,
Because I was twice as bonny as she; [mother,
She rais'd such a pother 'twix'd him and his
That were na my heart light, I wad die.

The day it was set, and the bridal to be,
The wife took a dwam, and lay down to die;
She main'd and she grain'd, out of dolour and pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again.

His kin was for ane of a higher degree,
Said, What had he to do with the like of me?
Albeit I was bonny, I was na for Johnny:
And were na my heart light, I wad die.

They said, I had neither cow nor caff,
Nor dribbles of drink rins thro' the draff,
Nor pickles of meal rins thro' the mill-e'e;
And were na my heart light, I wad die.

His titty she was baith wylie and slee,
She spy'd me as I came o'er the lee;
And then she ran in and made a loud din,
Believe your ain een, an ye trow na me.

His bonnet stood ance fu' round on his brow;
His auld ane looks ay as weel as some's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony gate it will hing,
And casts dimself dowie upon the corn-bing.

And now he gaes drooping about the dykes,
And a' he dow do is to hund the tykes:
The live-lang night he ne'er steeks his e'e,
And were na my heart light, I wad die.

Were I young for thee, as I ance hae been,
We shou'd hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it on the lily-white lee;
And wow gin I were but young for thee!"

[Lady Grisel Home, by whom this pathetic ballad was written, was the daughter of Sir Patrick Home, created Earl of Marchmont. She was born at Redbraes Castle, 25th December, 1665, was married to George Baillie, of Jerviswood, Esq., 17th September, 1692, and died at London, 6th December, 1746, in the 81st year of her age. Their eldest daughter, Lady Murray, of Stanhope, wrote Memoirs of the lives and characters of her parents—a piece of biography of the most affectionate and interesting kind. It was first made known by extracts, in the Appendix to Rose's observations on Fox's Historical Work, 1809, and has since been printed entire by Thomas Thomson, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh, 1822, 8vo.

The following fragment of a song by this distinguished lady has lately been discovered, in her hand-writing, among a parcel of old letters, written about the time of her father's forfeiture :—

O THE ewe-bughting's bonnie, baith e'ening and morn,
When our blythe shepherds play on their bog-reed and horn ;
While we're milking, they're lilting baith pleasant and clear,
But my heart's like to break when I think on my dear !

O the shepherds take pleasure to blow on the horn ;
To raise up their flocks o' sheep soon i' the morn ;
On the bonnie green banks they feed pleasant and free—
But, alas ! my dear heart ! all my sighing's for thee !]

The young Man's Dream.

THIS song is the composition of Balloon Tytler.

[And a charming song it is :—

I.

ONE night I dream'd I lay most easy,
By a murm'ring river's side,
Where lovely banks were spread with daisies,
And the streams did smoothly glide ;
While around me, and quite over,
Spreading branches were display'd,
All interwoven in due order,
Soon became a pleasant shade.

II.

I saw my lass come in most charming,
With a look and air so sweet ;
Ev'ry grace was most alarming,
Ev'ry beauty most complete.
Cupid with his bow attended ;
Lovely Venus too was there :
As his bow young Cupid bended,
Far away flew carking care.

III.

On a bank of roses seated,
Charming my true-love sung ;
While glad echo still repeated,
And the hills and valleys rung :
At the last, by sleep oppressed,
On the bank my love did lie,
By young Cupid still caressed,
While the graces round did fly.

IV.

The rose's red, the lily's blossom,
With her charms might not compare,
To view her cheeks and heaving bosom,
Down they droop'd as in despair.
On her slumber I encroaching,
Panting came to steal a kiss ;
Cupid smil'd at me approaching,
Seem'd to say, "There's nought amiss."

V.

With eager wishes I drew nigher,
This fair maiden to embrace ;
My breath grew quick, my pulse beat higher,
Gazing on her lovely face.
* * * * * *

VI.

The nymph, awaking, quickly check'd me,
Starting up, with angry tone ;
"Thus," says she, "do you respect me ?
Leave me quick, and hence begone."
Cupid, for me interposing,
To my love did bow full low ;
She from him her hands unloosing,
In contempt struck down his bow.

VII.

Angry Cupid from her flying,
Cry'd out, as he sought the skies,
"Haughty Nymphs their love denying,
Cupid ever shall despise."
As he spoke, old Care came wand'ring,
With him stalk'd destructive Time ;
Winter froze the streams, meand'ring,
Nipt the Roses in their prime.

VIII.

Spectres then my love surrounded,
At their back march'd chilling Death :
Whilst she, frighted and confounded,
Felt their blasting, pois'nous breath :
As her charms were swift decaying,
And the furrows seiz'd her cheek ;
Forbear, ye friends ! I vainly crying,
Wak'd in the attempt to speak.]

The Tears of Scotland.

DR. Blacklock told me that Smollett, who was at the bottom a great Jacobite, composed these beautiful and pathetic verses on the infamous depredations of the Duke of Cumberland after the battle of Culloden.

["The tears of Scotland" was a bold strain to be written in the year 1746. The picture of desolation is as true as it is moving.

MOURN, hapless Caledonia, mourn,
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn !
Thy sons for valour long renown'd,
Lie slaughter'd on their native ground :
Thy hospitable roofs no more
Invite the stranger to the door ;
In smoky ruins sunk they lie,
The monuments of cruelty.

The wretched owner sees, afar,
His all become the prey of war;
Bethinks him of his babes and wife,
Then smites his breast, and curses life.
Thy swains are famish'd on the rocks
Where once they fed their wanton flocks:
Thy ravish'd virgins shriek in vain;
Thy infants perish on the plain.

What boots it then, in ev'ry clime,
Thro' the wide-spreading waste of time,
Thy martial glory, crown'd with praise,
Still shone with undiminish'd blaze:
Thy tow'ring spirit now is broke,
Thy neck is bended to the yoke:
What foreign arms could never quell
By civil rage and rancour fell.

The rural pipe and merry lay
No more shall cheer the happy day:
No social scenes of gay delight
Beguile the dreary winter night:
No strains, but those of sorrow, flow,
And nought be heard but sounds of woe:
While the pale phantoms of the slain
Glide nightly o'er the silent plain.

Oh! baneful cause—oh! fatal morn,
Accurs'd to ages yet unborn!
The sons against their father stood;
The parent shed his children's blood!
Yet, when the rage of battle ceas'd,
The victor's soul was not appeas'd;
The naked and forlorn must feel
Devouring flames, and murd'ring steel.

The pious mother doom'd to death,
Forsaken, wanders o'er the heath,
The bleak wind whistles round her head,
Her helpless orphans cry for bread;
Bereft of shelter, food, and friend,
She views the shades of night descend;
And, stretch'd beneath th' inclement skies,
Weeps o'er her tender babes, and dies.

Whilst the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpair'd remembrance reigns,
Resentment of my country's fate
Within my filial breast shall beat;
And, spite of her insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow:
Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurel's torn!]

Ah! the poor Shepherd's mournful Fate.

Tune—*Gallashiels.*

The old title, *Sour Plums o' Gallashiels*, probably was the beginning of a song to this air, which is now lost.

The tune of *Gallashiels* was composed about the beginning of the present century by the Laird of Gallashiels' piper.

[William Hamilton, of Bangour, was an amiable and accomplished gentleman, and one of our sweetest lyric poets. "His mind is pictured," says the author of the life of Lord Kames, "in his verses. They are the easy and careless effusions of an elegant fancy and a chastened taste; and the sentiments they convey are the genuine feelings of a tender and susceptible heart, which perpetually owned the domination of some fair mistress; but whose passion generally evaporated in song, and made no serious or permanent impression." Hamilton died in March, 1754, aged 50 years. The song which follows is one of his best; it was censured by Dr. Johnson for an ill-paired rhyme—wishes and blushes—but harmony of rhyme is one thing, and true poetry another, and none knew this better than the critic.

"Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate,
When doom'd to love and languish,
To bear the scornful fair one's hate,
Nor dare disclose his anguish!
Yet eager looks and dying sighs,
My secret soul discover;
While rapture, trembling through mine eyes,
Reveals how much I love her.
The tender glance, the redd'ning cheek,
O'erspread with rising blushes,
A thousand various ways they speak,
A thousand various wishes.

For oh! that form so heavenly fair,
Those languid eyes so sweetly smiling,
That artless blush and modest air,
So fatally beguiling!
The every look and every grace,
So charm whene'er I view thee;
'Till death o'ertake me in the chase,
Still will my hopes pursue thee:
Then when my tedious hours are past,
Be this last blessing given,
Low at thy feet to breathe my last,
And die in sight of heaven."]

Mill, Mill O.—*

The original, or at least a song evidently prior to Ramsay's, is still extant.—It runs thus:

"As I cam down yon waterside,
And by yon shellin-hill, O,
There I spied a bonnie bonnie lass,
And a lass that I lov'd right weel, O."—

* ["Burns's inimitable ballad "The Soldier's Return" is copied from this literally, as far as the story and air goes; but how infinitely superior are his verses!"—Hogg.]

CHORUS.

The mill, mill, O, and the kill, kill, O,
And the coggin o' Peggy's wheel, O,
The sack and the sieve, and a' she did leave,
And danc'd the miller's reel, O.—

[That Burns had the verses as well as the air of the "Mill, Mill, O" in his mind when he wrote "The Poor and Honest Sodger," seems pretty evident: he has, however, improved the morality of the song, as well as heightened its poetry.]

We ran and they ran.

THE author of "We ran and they ran"—was a Rev. Mr. Murdoch M'Lennan, minister at Crathie, Dee-side.

[The song in question is a rough rude chant composed in honour of some and in derision of others who fought, or fled, or fell in the battle of Sherriff-muir. The verse on Robertson of Struan, the poet, is one of the best:

But Clephane acted pretty,
And Strowan the witty,
A poet that pleases us a', man;
For mine is but rhyme,
In respect of what's fine,
Or what he is able to draw, man."]

Waly, waly.

IN the west country I have heard a different edition of the second stanza.—Instead of the four lines, beginning with, "When cockle-shells," &c., the other way ran thus:—

O wherefore need I busk my head,
Or wherefore need I kame my hair,
Sin my fause luve has me forsook,
And says he'll never luve me mair.

[This is a very old as well as a very beautiful song: it first appeared in the "Tea Table Miscellany," and seems to have been re-touched and altered by a very skilful hand.

It is one of Sir Walter Scott's theories, that the finer and more poetic passages in our old oral verse have been injured, and oftentimes lost, as the ballads to which they belonged drifted along the stream of time:—

"O WALY, waly, up yon bank,
And waly, waly, down yon brae,
And waly by yon burn side,
Where I and my love were wont to gae.
O waly, waly, love is bonny
A little while, when it is new;
But when it's auld it waxeth cauld,
And fades away like morning dew.

When cockle-shells turn siller bells,
And mussels grow on ev'ry tree;
When frost and snaw shall warm us a',
Then shall my love prove true to me.
I leant my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trustie tree;
But first it bow'd, and syne it brake,
And sae did my fause love to me.

Now Arthur-seat shall be my bed,
The sheets shall ne'er be fyl'd by me:
Saint Anton's well shall be my drink,
Since my true love's forsaken me.
O Mart'mas wind, whan wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves aff the tree?
O gentle death, whan wilt thou cum,
And tak a life that wearies me?

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,
Nor blawing snaw's inclemencie;
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry,
But my love's heart grown cauld to me.
Whan we cam in by Glasgow town,
We were a comely sight to see;
My love was clad in velvet black,
And I mysel in cramasie.

But had I wist before I kisst,
That love had been sae ill to win,
I had lockt my heart in a case of gowd,
And pinn'd it wi a siller pin.
Oh, oh! if my young babe were born,
And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysel were dead and gone;
For a maid again I'll never be."]

Duncan Gray.

DR. BLACKLOCK informed me that he had often heard the tradition that this air was composed by a carman in Glasgow.*

* [If it was, it has been very long ago, as I have traced the song and air back for many generations. The song began:—

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Hey-howe the girdin o't,
On a feast-day when we were fou,
Sing hey the lang girdin o't.

It was rather what our gentry would account a queer song; but I have often heard both wives and lasses sing it without any reserve.—HOGG.]

Dumbarton Drums.

THIS is the last of the West Highland airs; and from it, over the whole tract of country to the confines of Tweed-side, there is hardly a tune or song that one can say has taken its origin from any place or transaction in that part of Scotland.—The oldest Ayr-shire reel is Stewarton Lasses, which was made by the father of the present Sir Walter Montgomery Cunningham, alias Lord Lysle; since which period there has indeed been local music in that country in great plenty.—Johnnie Faa is the only old song which I could ever trace as belonging to the extensive county of Ayr.

[The author of this song is unknown: there is some good sense in the lady's musings, though the poetic merit of the ditty is not so great:—

DUMBARTON drums beat bonny, O,
When they mind me of my dear Johnnie, O,
How happy am I
When my soldier is by,
While he kisses and blesses his Annie, O,
'Tis a soldier alone can delight me, O,
For his graceful looks do unite me, O,
While guarded in his arms,
I'll fear no war's alarms,
Neither danger nor death shall e'er fright me, O.

My love is a handsome laddie, O,
Genteel but ne'er foppish nor gaudie, O,
Tho' commissions are dear
Yet I'll buy him one this year,
For he shall serve no longer a caddie, O;
A soldier has honour and bravery, O;
Unacquainted with rogues and their knavery, O,
He minds no other thing
But the ladies or the King,
For every other care is but slavery, O.

Then I'll be the Captain's lady, O;
Farewell all my friends and my daddy, O;
I'll wait no more at home,
But I'll follow with the drum,
And whene'er that beats I'll be ready, O,
Dumbarton Drums sound bonny, O;
They are sprightly like my dear Johnnie, O:
How happy shall I be
When on my soldier's knee,
And he kisses and blesses his Annie, O!]

Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.

THIS song is by the Duke of Gordon.*—The old verses are,

"THERE'S cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And castocks in Strathbogie;
When ilka lad maun hae his lass,
Then fye, gie me my coggie.

There's Johnnie Smith has got a wife,
That scrimps him o' his coggie,
If she were mine, upon my life
I wad douk her in a boggie."

CHORUS.

My coggie, Sirs, my coggie, Sirs,
I cannot want my coggie:
I wadna gie my three-girr'd cap
For e'er a quene in Bogie.—

["The Cauld Kail" of his Grace of Gordon has long been a favourite in the north, and deservedly so, for it is full of life and manners. It is almost needless to say that kail is colewert, and much used in broth; that castocks are the stalks of a common cabbage, and that coggie is a wooden dish for holding porridge; it is also a drinking vessel.

"THERE'S cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And castocks in Stra'bogie;
Gin I but hae a bonny lass,
Ye're welcome to your coggie:
And ye may sit up a' the night,
And drink till it be braid day-light;
Gie me a lass baith clean and tight,
To dance the Reel o' Bogie.

In cotillons the French excel;
John Bull loves countra-dances;
The Spaniards dance fandangos well;
Mynheer an allemande prances:
In foursome reels the Scots delight,
At threesome they dance wond'rous light:
But twasome ding a' out o' sight,
Danc'd to the Reel o' Bogie.

Come, lads, and view your partners well,
Wale each a blythsome rogie;
I'll tak this lassie to mysel,
She looks sae keen and vogie!
Now, piper lad, bang up the spring;
The countra fashion is the thing,
To prie their mou's e'er we begin
To dance the Reel o' Bogie.

Now ilka lad has got a lass,
Save yon auld doited fogie;
And ta'en a fling upo' the grass,
As they do in Stra'bogie:
But a' the lasses look sae fain,
We canna think oursels to hain,
For they maun hae their come-again
To dance the Reel o' Bogie.

Now a' the lads hae done their best,
Like true men o' Stra'bogie;
We'll stop awhile and tak a rest,
And tipple out a coggie:
Come now, my lads, and tak your glass,
And try ilk other to surpass,
In wishing health to every lass
To dance the Reel o' Bogie."]

* He was born in 1743, and died in 1827.

For Lack of Gold.

THE country girls in Ayr-shire, instead of the line—

"She me forsook for a great duke,"

say,

"For Athole's duke she me forsook;"

which I take to be the original reading.

This song was written by the late Dr. Austin, physician at Edinburgh.—He had courted a lady, to whom he was shortly to have been married; but the Duke of Athole, having seen her, became so much in love with her, that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she jilted the doctor.

[The doctor gave his woes an airing in song, and then married a very agreeable and beautiful lady, by whom he had a numerous family. Nor did Jean Drummond, of Megginch, break her heart when James, Duke of Athole, died: she dried her tears, and gave her hand to Lord Adam Gordon. The song is creditable to the author.—CUNNINGHAM.

"FOR lack of gold she's left me, oh!
And of all that's dear bereft me, oh!
For Athole's duke, she me forsook,
And to endless care has left me, oh!
A star and garter have more art
Than youth, a true and faithful heart,
For empty titles we must part,
And for glitt'ring show she's left me, oh!

No cruel fair shall ever move
My injur'd heart again to love,
Thro' distant climates I must rove,
Since Jeannie she has left me, oh!
Ye pow'rs above, I to your care
Resign my faithless lovely fair,
Your choicest blessings be her share,
Tho' she's for ever left me, oh!"]

Here's a Health to my true Love, &c.

THIS song is Dr. Blacklock's. He told me that tradition gives the air to our James IV. of Scotland.

["Scottish traditions," says Joseph Ritson, "are to be received with great caution." He might have said the same thing of all things oral; but I see not why northern traditions are more liable to suspicion than the legends of other lands. Had the composition of an air or a song been imputed to one of his own Henrys or Edwards, he might have questioned it; but all the Stuarts were gifted men: James the First and Fifth were accomplished poets and musicians. The whole family were lovers of music and verse: it was not, therefore, wonderful that one of them should compose a pretty piece of music."—CUNNINGHAM.

The words are as follow:

To me what are riches encumber'd with care!
To me what is pomp's insignificant glare!
No minion of fortune, no pageant of state,
Shall ever induce me to envy his fate.

Their personal graces let fops idolize,
Whose life is but death in a splendid disguise;
But soon the pale tyrant his right shall resume,
And all their false lustre be hid in the tomb.

Let the meteor discovery attract the fond sage,
In fruitless researches for life to engage;
Content with my portion, the rest I forego,
Nor labour to gain disappointment and woe.

Contemptibly fond of contemptible self,
While misers their wishes concentre in pelf;
Let the god-like delight of imparting be mine,
Enjoyment reflected is pleasure divine.

Extensive dominion and absolute power,
May tickle ambition, perhaps for an hour;
But power in possession soon loses its charms,
While conscience remonstrates, and terror alarms.

With vigour, O teach me, kind heaven, to sustain
Those ills which in life to be suffer'd remain;
And when 'tis allow'd me the goal to descry,
For my species I liv'd, for myself let me die.]

Hey tutti taiti.

I HAVE met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce's march at the Battle of Bannockburn.

["It does not seem at all probable," says Ritson, "that the Scots had any martial music in the time of this monarch; it being their custom, at that period, for every man in the host to bear a little horn, with the blowing of which, as we are told by Froissart, they would make such a horrible noise as if all the devils of hell had been among them. It is not, therefore, likely that these unpolished warriors would be curious—

——— 'to move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders.'

These horns, indeed, are the only music ever mentioned by Barbour, to whom any particular march would have been too important a circumstance to be passed over in silence; so that it must remain a moot point whether Bruce's army were cheered by the sound of even a solitary bagpipe."

Who would take Ritson's word for this or anything else? for certainly a more capricious and dogmatic trifler never put pen to paper. I conceived it to have been a matter perfectly understood over all Scotland, that this air was 'Bruce's March;' and, if Ritson had had the ear of a bullock, he would have perceived that this ancient air had been composed exclusively for the bugles.—HOGG.]

[The following are the two songs which accompany this air in the Musical Museum, the one is a regular tippling chant, while the other is a Jacobite effusion:—

"LANDLADY, count the lawin,
The day is near the dawin;
Ye're a' blind drunk, boys,
And I'm but jolly fou.

CHORUS.

Hey, tutti, taiti,
How, tutti, taiti,
Wha's fou' now?

Cog an ye were ay fou,
Cog an ye were ay fou,
I wad sit and sing to you,
If ye were ay fou.

Hey, tutti, &c.

Weel may we a' be!
Ill may we never see!
God bless the Queen
And the companie!

Hey, tutti, &c."

Same Tune.

"HERE is to the King, Sir,
Ye ken wha I mean, Sir,
And to every honest man
That will do't again.

CHORUS.

Fill up your bumpers high,
We'll drink a' yere barrels dry,
Out upon them, fy, fy,
That winna do't again.

Here's to the chieftains
Of the Scots Highland clans,
They hae done it mair than ance,
And will do't again.

Fill up, &c.

When you hear the trumpet sound
Tutti taiti to the drum,
Up your swords, and down your gun,
And to the louns again.

Fill up, &c.

Here is to the king o' Swede!
Fresh laurels crown his head!
Pox on every sneaking blade
That winna do't again!

Fill up, &c.

But to mak a' things right, now,
He that drinks maun fight, too,
To shew his heart's upright, too,
And that he'll do't again.

Fill up, &c."

The glorious song of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" has made this air immortal. That animating strain is now sung wherever freedom is felt, and the British language understood. The more like recitation it is sung, the effect is better; scientific ornament injures the simple vigour of the words and air.]

Tak your auld Cloak about ye.

A PART of this old song, according to the English set of it, is quoted in Shakspeare.

[In the drinking scene in Othello — Iago sings:

"KING Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor lown;
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
Then take thine auld cloak about thee."

The old Song from which these stanzas are taken was recovered by Dr. Percy, and preserved by him in his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.

The economic spirit of Stephen has been transferred by a northern minstrel to Robert Bruce: the song, of which the following is a part, is one of our best as well as oldest.

"IN winter when the rain rain'd cauld,
And frost and snaw on ilka hill,
And Boreas, with his blasts sae bauld,
Was threat'ning a' our kye to kill:
Then Bell my wife, wha loves na strife,
She said to me right hastily,
Get up, goodman, save Cromie's life,
And tak your auld cloak about ye.

My Cromie is an useful cow,
And she is come of a good kyne;
Aft has she wet the bairns' mou',
And I am laith that she shou'd tyne.
Get up, goodman, it is fu' time,
The sun shines in the lift sae hie;
Sloth never made a gracious end,
Go tak your auld cloak about ye.

My cloak was ance a good grey cloak,
When it was fitting for my wear;
But now it's scantly worth a groat,
For I have worn't this thirty year?
Let's spend the gear that we have won,
We little ken the day we'll die:
Then I'll be proud, since I have sworn
To have a new cloak about me.

In days when our king Robert rang,
His trews they cost but haff a crown;
He said they were a groat o'er dear,
And call'd the taylor thief and loun.
He was the king that wore a crown,
And thou the man of laigh degree,
'Tis pride puts a' the country down,
Sae tak thy auld cloak about thee."]

Ye Gods, was Strephon's Picture blest?

Tune—*Fourteenth of October.*

THE title of this air shews that it alludes to the famous king Crispian, the patron of the honourable corporation of shoemakers.—St. Crispian's day falls on the fourteenth of October, old style, as the old proverb tells:

"On the fourteenth of October,
Was ne'er a sutor * sober."

[William Hamilton, of Bangour, wrote this song on hearing that a young lady of birth and beauty wore his picture in her bosom. Ramsay obtained a copy from the author, and published it in the Tea Table Miscellany.

"YE gods, was Strephon's picture blest
With the fair heaven of Chloe's breast?
Move softer, thou fond flutt'ring heart,
Oh gently throb, too fierce thou art.
Tell me, thou brightest of thy kind,
For Strephon was the bliss design'd?
For Strephon's sake, dear charming maid,
Did'st thou prefer his wand'ring shade?

And thou bless'd shade, that sweetly art
Lodg'd so near my Chloe's heart,
For me the tender hour improve,
And softly tell how dear I love.
Ungrateful thing! it scorns to hear
Its wretched master's ardent prayer,
Ingrossing all that beauteous heaven
That Chloe, lavish maid, has given.

I cannot blame thee: were I lord
Of all the wealth these breasts afford;
I'd be a miser too, nor give
An alms to keep a god alive.
Oh! smile not thus, my lovely fair,
On these cold looks that lifeless are:
Prize him whose bosom glows with fire,
With eager love and soft desire.

'Tis true thy charms, O pow'rful maid!
To life can bring the silent shade:
Thou canst surpass the painter's art,
And real warmth and flames impart.
But, oh! it ne'er can love like me,
I ever lov'd, and lov'd but thee:
Then, charmer, grant my fond request;
Say, thou canst love, and make me blest."

Pastoral designations were the fashion of Hamilton's day: how the ladies would have blushed and fluttered their fans to have been spoken of in song in the language of life.]

* *Sutor.*—A Shoemaker.

Since robb'd of all that charm'd my View.

THE old name of this air is, "the Blossom o' the Raspberry." The song is Dr. Blacklock's.

[The verse is melodious, and the sentiments of the purest nature; the subject—unrequited love. We can only give the first and last verses, as the song is a long one:—

SINCE robb'd of all that charm'd my view,
Of all my soul e'er fancied fair,
Ye smiling native scenes, adieu,
With each delightful object there!
Oh! when my heart revolves the joys
Which in your sweet recess I knew,
The last dread shock, which life destroys,
Is Heaven compar'd with losing you!

Ah me! had Heaven and she prov'd kind,
Then full of age, and free from care,
How blest had I my life resign'd,
Where first I breath'd this vital air:
But since no flatt'ring hope remains,
Let me my wretched lot pursue;
Adieu! dear friends and native scenes!
To all but grief and love, adieu!"]

Young Damon.

This air is by Oswald.

[This is one of the hurried effusions of Robert Fergusson: his attempts in lyric composition were few and sometimes not very happy.

Tune—*Highland Lamentation.*

"Amidst a rosy bank of flowers
Young Damon mourn'd his forlorn fate,
In sighs he spent his languid hours,
And breath'd his woes in lonely state;
Gay joy no more shall ease his mind,
No wanton sports can sooth his care,
Since sweet Amanda prov'd unkind,
And left him full of black despair.

His looks, that were as fresh as morn,
Can now no longer smiles impart;
His pensive soul on sadness borne,
Is rack'd and torn by Cupid's dart;
Turn, fair Amanda, cheer your swain,
Unshroud him from this vale of woe;
Range every charm to soothe the pain
That in his tortur'd breast doth grow."]

Kirk wad let me be.

Tradition in the western parts of Scotland tells that this old song, of which there are still three stanzas extant, once saved a covenanting clergyman out of a scrape. It was a little prior to the revolution, a period when being a Scots covenanter was being a felon, that one of their clergy, who was at that very time hunted by the merciless soldiery, fell in, by accident, with a party of the military. The soldiers were not exactly acquainted with the person of the reverend gentleman of whom they were in search; but, from suspicious circumstances, they fancied that they had got one of that cloth and opprobrious persuasion among them in the person of this stranger. "Mass John," to extricate himself, assumed a freedom of manners very unlike the gloomy strictness of his sect; and, among other convivial exhibitions, sung (and, some traditions say, composed on the spur of the occasion), "Kirk wad let me be," with such effect, that the soldiers swore he was a d——d honest fellow, and that it was impossible *he* could belong to those hellish conventicles; and so gave him his liberty.

The first stanza of this song, a little altered, is a favourite kind of dramatic interlude acted at country weddings, in the south-west parts of the kingdom. A young fellow is dressed up like an old beggar; a peruke, commonly made of carded tow, represents hoary locks; an old bonnet; a ragged plaid, or surtout, bound with a straw rope for a girdle; a pair of old shoes, with straw ropes twisted round his ancles, as is done by shepherds in snowy weather: his face they disguise as like wretched old age as they can: in this plight he is brought into the wedding house, frequently to the astonishment of strangers, who are not in the secret, and begins to sing—

"O, I am a silly auld man,
My name it is auld Glenae,*" &c.

He is asked to drink, and by and bye to dance, which after some uncouth excuses he is prevailed on to do, the fiddler playing the tune, which here is commonly called "Auld Glenae;" in short he is all the time so plied with liquor that he is understood to get intoxicated, and, with all the ridiculous gesticulations of an old drunken beggar, he dances and staggers until he falls on the floor; yet still, in all his riot, nay, in his rolling and tumbling on the floor, with some or other drunken motion of his body, he beats time to the music, till at last he is supposed to be carried out dead drunk.

[There are many versions of this Nithsdale song; here is one of the least objectionable, but not the least curious.

"I am a silly puir man,
Gaun hirplin owre a tree;
For courting a lass in the dark
The kirk came haunting me.
If a' my rags were off,
And nought but hale claes on,
O I could please a young lass
As well as a richer man.

The parson he ca'd me a rogue,
The session an a' thegither,
The justice he cried, You dog,
Your knavery I'll consider:
Sae I drapt down on my knee
And thus did humbly pray,
O, if ye'll let me gae free,
My hale confession ye'se hae.

'Twas late on tysday at e'en,
When the moon was on the grass;
O, just for charity's sake,
I was kind to a beggar lass.
She had begged down Annan side,
Lochmaben and Hightae;
But deil an awmous she got,
Till she met wi' auld Glenae."

* Glenae, on the small river Ae, in Annandale; the seat and designation of an ancient branch, and the present representative, of the gallant and unfortunate Dalzels of Carnwath. —This is the *Author's* note.

The song goes on to relate what passed between the Sinner and the Session; but we cannot lift the curtain higher from this rustic drama.—CUNNINGHAM.]

Blythe was she.

I COMPOSED these verses while I stayed at Ochtertyre with Sir William Murray.—The lady, who was also at Ochtertyre at the same time, was the well-known toast, Miss Euphemia Murray of Lentrose, who was called, and very justly, "The Flower of Strathmore." [She was sister to my accomplished and gallant friend, Sir George Murray, who claimed for her one night the superiority to all the flowers of Yarrow from me, alleging that I could not dispute the taste of Burns. I said that neither Burns nor he had ever seen one of the virgin flowers of Yarrow, and, until such time as he himself had, I denied the position most positively. He said he had made a resolution, then, that he would come and see them. He is the best president that ever took a chair, for a large party; for he has the art of keeping every man pleased with himself, and consequently pleased with him."—HOGG.]

Johnny Faa, or the Gypsie Laddie.

THE people in Ayr-shire begin this song—

"The gypsies cam to my Lord Cassilis' yett."—

They have a great many more stanzas in this song than I ever yet saw in any printed copy.—The castle is still remaining at Maybole, where his lordship shut up his wayward spouse, and kept her for life.

[As tradition strongly vouched for the truth of the story upon which this ballad is founded, Mr. Finlay, with a laudable curiosity, resolved to make the necessary inquiries, the result of which, without much variation, he published in his "Scottish Ballads," and is as follows:

"That the Earl of Cassilis had married a nobleman's daughter contrary to her wishes, she having been previously engaged to another; but that the persuasion and importunity of her friends at last brought her to consent: That Sir John Faw, of Dunbar, her former lover, seizing the opportunity of the Earl's absence on a foreign embassy, disguised himself and a number of his retainers as gypsies, and carried off the lady, 'nothing loth:' That the Earl having returned opportunely at the time of the commission of the act, and nowise inclined to participate in his consort's ideas on the subject, collected his vassals, and pursued the lady and her paramour to the borders of England, where, having overtaken them, a battle ensued, in which Faw and his followers were all killed or taken prisoners, excepting one,

'——— the meanest of them all,
Who lives to weep and sing their fall.'

"It is by this survivor that the ballad is supposed to have been written. The Earl, on bringing back the fair fugitive, banished her *a mensa et thoro*, and, it is said, confined her for life in a tower at the village of Maybole, in Ayr-shire, built for the purpose; and, that nothing might remain about this tower unappropriated to its original destination, eight heads, carved in stone, below one of the turrets, are said to be the effigies of *so many* of the gypsies. The lady herself, as well as the survivor of Faw's followers, contributed to perpetuate the remembrance of the transaction; for if he wrote a song about it, she wrought it in tapestry; and this piece of workmanship is still preserved at Culzean Castle. It remains to be mentioned that the ford, by which the lady and her lover crossed the river Doon from a wood near Cassilis-house, is still denominated the Gypsies' Steps.

"There seems to be no reason for identifying the hero with Johnnie Faa, who was king of the gypsies about the year 1590. The coincidence of names, and the disguise assumed by the lover, is perhaps the foundation on which popular tradition has raised the structure. Upon authority so vague, nothing can be assumed; and indeed I am inclined to adopt the opinion of a correspondent, that the whole story may have been the invention of some feudal or political rival, to injure the character and hurt the feelings of an opponent; at least, after a pretty diligent search, I have been able to discover nothing that in the slightest degree confirms the popular tale."

"THE gypsies came to our lord's gate,
And wow but they sang sweetly;
They sang sae sweet, and sae complete
That down came the fair ladie.

When she came tripping down the stair,
And a' her maids before her;
As soon as they saw her weelfar'd face,
They coost the glamour o'er her.

'Gar tak frae me this gay mantile,
And bring to me a plaidie;
For if kith and kin and a' had sworn,
I'll follow the gypsie laddie.

'Yestreen I lay in a weel-made bed,
And my good lord beside me;
This night I'll lie in a tenant's barn,
Whatever shall betide me.'

Oh! come to your bed, says Johnny Faa,
Oh! come to your bed, my deary;
For I vow and swear by the hilt of my sword,
That your lord shall nae mair come near ye.

'I'll go to bed to my Johnny Faa,
And I'll go to bed to my dearie;
For I vow and swear by what past yestreen,
That my lord shall nae mair come near me.

'I'll mak a hap to my Johnny Faa,
And I'll mak a hap to my deary;
And he's get a' the coat gaes round,
And my lord shall nae mair come near me.'

And when our lord came hame at e'en,
And speir'd for his fair lady,
The tane she cry'd, and the other reply'd,
She's away wi' the gypsie laddie.

'Gae saddle to me the black, black steed,
Gae saddle and mak him ready;
Before that I either eat or sleep,
I'll gae seek my fair lady.'

And we were fifteen well-made men,
Altho' we were nae bonny;
And we were a' put down for ane,
A fair young wanton lady."*

The following verse has been added:—

"My ladie's skin, like the driven snaw,
Look'd through her satin cleedin',
Her white hause, as the wine ran down,
It like a rose did redden."

John Martin, the distinguished Painter, who has all the love of a true Borderer for the strains which gladdened his ancestors, recites a Northumberland version of this strain, which calls the fortunate and unfortunate hero Gypsie Geordie.]

To Daunton me.

THE two following old stanzas to this tune have some merit:

"To daunton me, to daunton me,
O ken ye what it is that'll daunton me?—
There's eighty-eight and eighty-nine,
And a' that I hae borne sinsyne,
There's cess and press,† and Presbytrie,
I think it will do meikle for to daunton me.

But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what it is that wad wanton me—
To see guid corn upon the rigs,
And banishment amang the Whigs,
And right restor'd where right sud be,
I think it would do meikle for to wanton me.

[A third verse runs thus:

"But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what maist wad wanton me?
To see King James at Enburgh Cross
Wi' fifty thousand foot and horse;
And the usurper forc'd to flee,
O this is that maist wad wanton me!"]

The Bonnie Lass made the Bed to me.

"THE Bonnie Lass made the Bed to me," was composed on an amour of Charles II. when skulking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the House of Portletham, who was the "lass that made the bed to him:"—two verses of it are,

"I kiss'd her lips sae rosy red,
While the tear stood blinkin in her e'e;
I said, My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye ay shall make the bed to me.

She took her mither's holland sheets,
And made them a' in sarks to me;
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me."

[A version of this old song, re-touched by the master hand of Burns, is inserted among the Songs, under the title of "The Lass that made the Bed to me."]

Absence.

A SONG in the manner of Shenstone.

This song and air are both by Dr. Blacklock.

[From this strain, in the manner of Shenstone, we may extract some pastoral touches:—

"YE harvests that wave in the breeze,
As far as the view can extend;
Ye mountains umbrageous with trees,
Whose tops so majestic ascend;
Your landscape what joy to survey,
Were Melissa with me to admire!
Then the harvests would glitter how gay,
How majestic the mountains aspire!]

* [VAR.—The Earl of Cassilis' lady.]

† [Scot and lot.]

Ye zephyrs that visit my fair,
  Ye sun-beams around her that play,
Does her sympathy dwell on my care,
  Does she number the hours of my stay?
First perish ambition and wealth,
  First perish all else that is dear,
E'er one sigh should escape her by stealth,
  E'er my absence should cost her one tear."]

I had a Horse, and I had nae Mair.

THIS story is founded on fact. A John Hunter, ancestor of a very respectable farming family, who live in a place in the parish, I think, of Galston, called Bar-mill, was the luckless hero that "had a horse and had nae mair."—For some little youthful follies he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West-Highlands, where "he feed himself to a *Highland* Laird," for that is the expression of all the oral editions of the song I ever heard. The present Mr. Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great grand-child of our hero.

[David Herd found, no one knows where, these capital comic verses, and published them in his collection. Johnson added the original music.

I HAD a horse, and I had nae mair,
  I gat him frae my daddy;
My purse was light, and heart was sair,
  But my wit it was fu' ready.
And sae I thought me on a time,
  Outwittens of my daddy,
To fee mysel to a lawland laird,
  Wha had a bonny lady.

I wrote a letter, and thus began,—
  'Madam, be not offended,
I'm o'er the lugs in love wi' you,
  And care not tho' ye kend it:
For I get little frae the laird,
  And far less frae my daddy,
And I would blythely be the man
  Would strive to please my lady.'

She read my letter, and she leugh,
  'Ye needna been sae blate, man;
You might hae come to me yoursel,
  And tauld me o' your state, man:
You might hae come to me yoursel,
  Outwittens o' ony body,
And made *John Gowkston* of the laird,
  And kiss'd his bonny lady.'

Then she pat siller in my purse,
  We drank wine in a coggie;
She feed a man to rub my horse,
  And wow; but I was vogie!
But I gat ne'er sae sair a fleg,
  Since I came frae my daddy.
The laird came, rap, rap, to the yett,
  When I was wi' his lady.

Then she pat me below a chair,
  And happ'd me wi' a plaidie;
But I was like to swarf wi' fear,
  And wish'd me wi' my daddy.
The laird went out, he saw na me,
  I went when I was ready;
I promis'd, but I ne'er gade back
  To kiss my bonny lady.]

Up and warn a' Willie.

THIS edition of the song, I got from Tom Niel, of facetious fame, in Edinburgh. The expression "Up and warn a' Willie," alludes to the Crantara, or warning of a Highland Clan to arms. Not understanding this, the Lowlanders in the west, and south, say, "Up and *waur* them a'," &c.

[The ballad given in Johnson is a sort of Gazette account of the battle of Sheriff-muir, where both generals claimed the victory; nor has the rustic minstrel decided the question. The song no sooner made its appearance than it was parodied in a scoffing ballad, of which the following is the starting verse.

UP an' waur them a', Willie,
  Up an' waur them a',
Up and sell your sour milk,
  And craw aboon them a', Willie
Up and waur them a', Willie,
  Up an' waur them a',
Ye'se be prince o' Musselburgh,
  And king in Fisherraw, Willie.

Tom Niel, who gave the song to Burns, was a carpenter in Edinburgh, and lived chiefly by making coffins. He was also Precentor, or Clerk, in one of the churches. He had a good strong voice, and was greatly distinguished by his powers of mimickry, and his humourous manner of singing the old Scottish ballads.]

Auld Rob Morris.

IT is remark-worthy that the song of "Hooly and Fairly," in all the old editions of it, is called "The Drunken wife o' Galloway," which localizes it to that country.

["Auld Rob Morris" and "The Drunken wife o' Gallowa," are two first-rate old lyrics; the former was printed as an ancient strain in

Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany: the latter was not discovered so early, yet it is equally authentic.

MITHER.

THERE'S Auld Rob Morris that wins in yon glen, [men;
He's the king o' gude fallows, and wale o' auld
Has fourscore o' black sheep, and fourscore too,
And auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun loo.

DOUGHTER.

Haud your tongue, mither, and let that abee,
For his eild and my eild can never agree;
They'll never agree, and that will be seen,
For he is fourscore, and I'm but fifteen.

MITHER.

Haud your tongue, doughter, and lay by your pride,
For he's be the bridegroom, and ye's be the bride;
He shall lie by your side, and kiss ye too,
Auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun loo.

DOUGHTER.

Auld Rob Morris, I ken him fu' weel,
His back sticks out like ony peat-creel;
He's out-shinn'd, in-knee'd, and ringle-e'ed too,
Auld Rob Morris is the man I'll ne'er loo.

MITHER.

Tho' auld Rob Morris be an elderly man,
Yet his auld brass it will buy a new pan;
Then, doughter, ye shouldna be sae ill to shoo,
For auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun loo.

DOUGHTER.

But auld Rob Morris I never will hae, [grey;
His back is sae stiff, and his beard is grown
I had rather die than live wi' him a year,
Sae mair of Rob Morris I never will hear.

The "Drunken wife o' Gallowa" is in another strain: the idea is original, and it cannot be denied that the author, whoever he was, has followed up the conception with great spirit. A few verses will prove this.

OH! what had I ado for to marry, [nary;
My wife she drinks naething but sack and ca-
I to her friends complained right early,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly.

Hooly and fairly; hooly and fairly,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly!

First she drank Crommie, and syne she drank Garie,
Then she has drunken my bonnie grey mearie,
That carried me thro' the dub and the lairie,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly!

The very grey mittens that gade on my han's,
To her ain neibour wife she has laid them in pawns, [dearly,
Wi' my bane-headed staff that I lo'ed sae
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly!

I never was given to wrangling nor strife,
Nor e'er did refuse her the comforts of life;
E'er it come to a war, I'm aye for a parley,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly!

A pint wi' her cummers I wad her allow;
But when she sits down she fills hersell fou;
And when she is fou' she's unco camstrarie,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly!

An when she comes hame, she lays on the lads,
And ca's a' the lasses baith limmers and jads;
And I my ain sell an auld cuckold carlie,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly!]

Nancy's Ghost.

THIS song is by Dr. Blacklock.

[It was composed in 1787 expressly for the "Museum." It is adapted to the old air of "Bonnie Kate of Edinburgh."

AH! hapless man, thy perjur'd vow
Was to thy Nancy's heart a grave!
The damps of death bedew'd my brow
Whilst thou, the dying maid could save!"

Thus spake the vision, and withdrew;
From Sandy's cheeks the crimson fled;
Guilt and Despair their arrows threw,
And now behold the traitor dead!

Remember, swains, my artless strains,
To plighted faith be ever true;
And let no injur'd maid complain
She finds false Sandy live in you!

Tune your Fiddles, &c.

THIS song was composed by the Rev. John Skinner, Nonjuror Clergyman at Linshart, near Peterhead. He is likewise author of Tullochgorum, Ewie wi' the Crooked Horn, John o' Badenyond, &c., and, what is of still more consequence, he is one of the worthiest of mankind. He is the author of an ecclesiastical history of Scotland. The air is by Mr. Marshall, butler to the Duke of Gordon; the first composer of strathspeys of the age. I have been told by somebody, who had it of Marshall himself, that he took the idea of his three most

celebrated pieces, The Marquis of Huntley's Reel, His Farewell, and Miss Admiral Gordon's Reel, from the old air, "The German Lairdie."

[There is generally a dance of words in the lyric compositions of Skinner, which show that his heart was in harmony with the music: this is not wanting here:—

TUNE your fiddles, tune them sweetly,
Play the Marquis' Reel discreetly;
Here we are a band completely
Fitted to be jolly.
Come, my boys, be blythe and gaucie,
Every youngster choose his lassie,
Dance wi' life, and be not saucy,
Shy, nor melancholy.

Lay aside your sour grimaces,
Clouded brows, and drumlie faces;
Look about and see their graces,
How they smile delighted.
Now's the season to be merry,
Hang the thoughts of Charon's ferry;
Time enough to turn camstary,
When we're old and doited.]

Gil Morice.*

THIS plaintive ballad ought to have been called Child Maurice, and not Gil Morice. In its present dress, it has gained immortal honour from Mr. Home's taking from it the groundwork of his fine tragedy of Douglas. But I am of opinion that the present ballad is a modern composition; perhaps not much above the age of the middle of the last century; at least I should be glad to see or hear of a copy of the present words prior to 1650. That it was taken from an old ballad, called "Child Maurice," now lost, I am inclined to believe; but the present one may be classed with "Hardyknute," "Kenneth," "Duncan, the Laird of Woodhouselee," "Lord Livingston," "Binnorie," "The Death of Monteith," and many other modern productions, which have been swallowed by many readers as ancient fragments of old poems. This beautiful plaintive tune was composed by Mr. M'Gibbon, the selector of a collection of Scots tunes.—R. B.

In addition to the observations on Gil Morice, I add, that, of the songs which Capt. Riddel mentions, "Kenneth" and "Duncan" are juvenile compositions of Mr. M'Kenzie, "The Man of Feeling."—M'Kenzie's father shewed them in MSS. to Dr. Blacklock, as the productions of his son, from which the Doctor rightly prognosticated that the young poet would make, in his more advanced years, a respectable figure in the world of letters.

This I had from Blacklock.

[Of the many ancient ballads which have been preserved by tradition among the peasantry of Scotland, none has excited more interest in the world of letters than the beautiful and pathetic tale of "Gil Morice;" and this, no less on account of its own intrinsic merits as a piece of exquisite poetry, than of its having furnished the plot of the justly-celebrated tragedy of "Douglas." When this tragedy was originally produced at Edinburgh, in 1756, the title of the heroine was Lady Barnard: the alteration to Lady Randolph was made on its being transplanted to London. It was acted in Covent Garden in 1757. It has likewise supplied Mr. Langhorne with the principal materials from which he has woven the fabric of his sweet, though prolix, poem of 'Owen of Carron;' and Mr. Jamieson mentions that it has also been 'made the subject of a dramatic entertainment, with songs, by Mr. Rennie of Aberdeen.' From the ballad, so well known, it is needless to make any extracts: for pathetic simplicity it is all but unrivalled.]

When I upon thy Bosom lean.

THIS song was the work of a very worthy facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram, near Muirkirk, which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connexion as security for some persons concerned in that villanous bubble, THE AYR BANK. He has often told me that he composed this song one day when his wife had been fretting o'er their misfortunes.

[This is the very song "that some kind husband had addrest to some sweet wife," alluded to with such exquisite delicacy in the "Epistle to J. Lapraik."

THERE was ae *sang* amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thrill'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

[* Mr. Pinkerton remarks that, in many parts of Scotland, "Gil" at this day, signifies "Child," as is the case in the Gaelic; thus, "Gilchrist" means the "Child of Christ."—"Child" seems also to have been the customary appellation of a young nobleman, when about fifteen years of age.]

WHEN I UPON THY BOSOM LEAN.

When I upon thy bosom lean,
And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
I glory in the sacred ties
That made us ane, wha ance were twain:
A mutual flame inspires us baith,
The tender look, the melting kiss:
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,
But only gie us change o' bliss.

Hae I a wish? it's a' for thee;
I ken thy wish is me to please;
Our moments pass sae smooth away,
That numbers on us look and gaze,
Weel pleas'd they see our happy days,
Nor envy's sel find aught to blame;
And ay when weary cares arise,
Thy bosom still shall be my hame.

I'll lay me there, and take my rest,
And if, that aught disturb my dear,
I'll bid her laugh her cares away,
And beg her not to drap a tear:
Hae I a joy? its a' her ain;
United still her heart and mine;
They're like the woodbine round the tree,
That's twin'd till death shall them disjoin.]

The Highland Character.

[OR, GARB OF OLD GAUL.]

THIS tune was the composition of Gen. Reid, and called by him "The Highland, or 42nd Regiment's March." The words are by Sir Harry Erskine.

[Sir Harry Erskine was a wit, an orator, and something of a poet: his song on the Highland character was once very popular: the commencement is indeed agreeable to national vanity, as well as suitable to the music.

In the garb of old Gaul, with the fire of old Rome, [we come,
From the heath-cover'd mountains of Scotia
Where the Romans endeavour'd our country to gain; [in vain.
But our ancestors fought, and they fought not

No effeminate customs our sinews unbrace,
No luxurious tables enervate our race,
Our loud-sounding pipe bears the true martial strain,
So do we the old Scottish valour retain.

We're tall as the oak on the mount of the vale, [assail,
As swift as the roe which the hound doth
As the full moon in autumn our shields do appear,
Minerva would dread to encounter our spear.

As a storm in the ocean when Boreas blows,
So are we enrag'd when we rush on our foes;
We sons of the mountains, tremendous as rocks, [ing strokes.]
Dash the force of our foes with our thunder-

Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

THERE is in several collections the old song of "Leader-Haughs and Yarrow." It seems to have been the work of one of our itinerant minstrels, as he calls himself, at the conclusion of his song, "Minstrel Burn."*

[Who Minstrel Burn was is a question which antiquaries are unable to solve: that he was a borderer seems probable from the subject of his song, and that he had not a little of the poet's spirit his song survives to prove. The first and last verses are very beautiful.

I.

When Phœbus bright, the azure skies
With golden rays enlight'neth,
He makes all Nature's beauties rise,
Herbs, trees, and flow'rs he quick'neth:
Amongst all those he makes his choice,
And with delight goes thorow,
With radiant beams and silver streams
O'er Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

II.

When Aries the day and night
In equal length divideth,
Auld frosty Saturn takes his flight,
Nae langer he abideth;
Then Flora Queen, with mantle green,
Casts aff her former sorrow,
And vows to dwell with Ceres' sel',
In Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

III.

Pan playing on his aiten reed,
And shepherds him attending,
Do here resort their flocks to feed,
The hills and haughs commending.
With cur and kent upon the bent,
Sing to the sun, good-morrow,
And swear nae fields mair pleasure yields
Than Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

* [Burns was quite right in this conjecture. "Leader Haughs and Yarrow" was written by one Nicol Burn, who seems to have been the last of the old Border Minstrels. "The words of Burn the Violer" are likely too his last lay. They appear to have been produced when "the minstrel was infirm and old;" and seem to have been intended as an addition and conclusion to his song of "Leader Haughs and Yarrow."]

IV.

A house there stands on Leaderside,*
Surmounting my descriving,
With rooms sae rare, and windows fair,
Like Dedalus' contriving;
Men passing by, do aften cry,
In sooth it hath nae marrow;
It stands as sweet on Leaderside,
As Newark does on Yarrow.

V.

A mile below wha lists to ride,
They'll hear the mavis singing;
Into St. Leonard's banks she'll bide,
Sweet birks her head o'erhinging;
The lintwhite loud and Progne proud,
With tuneful throats and narrow,
Into St. Leonard's banks they sing
As sweetly as in Yarrow.

VI.

The lapwing lilteth o'er the lee,
With nimble wing she sporteth;
But vows she'll flee far frae the tree
Where Philomel resorteth:
By break of day the lark can say,
I'll bid you a good-morrow,
I'll streek my wing, and, mounting, sing
O'er Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

VII.

Park, Wanton-waws, and Wooden-cleugh,
The East and Western Mainses,
The wood of Lauder's fair enough,
The corns are good in Blainshes;
Where aits are fine, and sold by kind,
That if ye search all thorow
Mearns, Buchan, Mar, nane better are
Than Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

VIII.

In Burmill Bog, and Whiteslade Shaws,
The fearful hare she haunteth;
Brig-haugh and Braidwoodshiel she knaws,
And Chapel-wood frequenteth;
Yet when she irks, to Kaidsly birks
She rins, and sighs for sorrow,
That she should leave sweet Leader-Haughs,
And cannot win to Yarrow.

IX.

What sweeter music wad ye hear
Than hounds and beigles crying?
The started hare rins hard with fear,
Upon her speed relying:
But yet her strength it fails at length,
Nae beilding can she hurrow,
In Sorrel's field, Cleckman, or Hag's,
And sighs to be in Yarrow.

X.

For Rockwood, Ringwood, Spoty, Shag,
With sight and scent pursue her,
Till, ah! her pith begins to flag,
Nae cunning can rescue her:
O'er dub and dyke, o'er seugh and syke,
She'll rin the fields all thorow,
Till faild, she fa's in Leader-Haughs,
And bids fareweel to Yarrow.

XI.

Sing Erslington and Cowdenknows,
Where Homes had ance commanding;
And Drygrange with the milk-white ewes,
'Twixt Tweed and Leader standing;
The birds that flee throw Reedpath trees,
And Gledswood banks ilk morrow,
May chant and sing—Sweet Leader-Haughs,
And bonny howms of Yarrow.

XII.

But Minstrel Burn cannot assuage
His grief, while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age,
That fleeting time procureth:
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where blyth fowk kend nae sorrow,
With Homes that dwelt on Leaderside,
And Scots that dwelt on Yarrow.

THE WORDS OF BURN THE VIOLER.†

WHAT, shall my viol silent be,
Or leave her wonted scriding;
But choice some sadder elegie,
No sports and mirth deriding.

It must be fain with lower strain
Than it was wont beforrow,
To sound the praise of Leader-haughs
And the bonny banks of Yarrow.

But floods have overflown the banks,
The greenish haughs disgracing,
And trees in woods grow thin in ranks,
About the fields defacing.

For water waxes, wood doth waind,
More, if I could for sorrow,
In rural verse I could rehearse
Of Leader-Haughs and Yarrow.

But sighs and sobs o'erset my breath,
Sore saltish tears forth sending,
All things sublunar here on earth
Are subject to an ending.

So must my song, though somewhat long,
Though late at even and morrow,
I'll sigh and sing sweet Leader-Haughs,
And the bonny banks of Yarrow.

* Thirlstane Castle: an ancient seat of the Earl of Lauderdale.

† [These verses do not appear to have been known to Allan Ramsay, when compiling his "Tea Table Miscellany," otherwise we think he would have printed them along with the song to which they form the melancholy companion. The above constitute, we fear, all the remaining works of Burn the Violer.]

This is no my ain House.

THE first half-stanza is old, the rest is Ramsay's. The old words are—

O THIS is no my ain house,
My ain house, my ain house;
This is no my ain house,
I ken by the biggin o't.

Bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
My door-cheeks, my door-cheeks;
Bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
And pan-cakes the riggin o't.

This is no my ain wean,
My ain wean, my ain wean;
This is no my ain wean,
I ken by the greetie o't.

I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
Aff my head, aff my head;
I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
And row't about the feetie o't.

The tune is an old Highland air, called "*Shuan truish willighan.*"

Laddie, lie near me.

THIS song is by Dr. Blacklock.

[The chief fault of the lyric compositions of this poet is want of simplicity: with how much ease Burns and the old minstrels commenced their strains, compared to the starting stanza of "Laddie, lie near me."

HARK, the loud tempest shakes the earth to its centre, [venture;
How mad were the task on a journey to
How dismal's my prospect, of life I am weary,
O! listen, my love, I beseech thee to hear me,
Hear me, hear me, in tenderness hear me;
All the long winter night, laddie, lie near me.

Nights though protracted, tho' piercing the weather, [gether;
Yet summer was endless when we were to-
Now since thy absence I feel most severely
Joy is extinguished and being is dreary,
Dreary, dreary, painful and dreary; [me.
All the long winter night, laddie, lie near

With far more natural ease the author of the old verses glides into his subject.

LANG hae we parted been, lassie, my dearie,
Now we are met again, lassie, lie near me,
Near me, near me, lassie, lie near me;
Lang hast thou lien thy lane, lassie lie near me.
A' that I hae endur'd, lassie, my dearie,
Here in thy arms is cur'd, lassie, lie near me,
Near me, near me, lassie, lie near me; [me.
Lang hast thou lien thy lane, lassie, lie near

These words have a Jacobite hue: the song was composed, it is said, by one of the Scottish exiles on returning to his family after the act of oblivion.]

The Gaberlunzie Man.*

THE Gaberlunzie Man is supposed to commemorate an intrigue of James the Vth. Mr. Callander of Craigforth published, some years ago, an edition of "Christ's Kirk on the Green," and the "Gaberlunzie Man," with notes critical and historical. James the Vth is said to have been fond of Gosford, in Aberlady Parish, and that it was suspected by his contemporaries that, in his frequent excursions to that part of the country, he had other purposes in view besides golfing and archery. Three favourite ladies, Sandilands, Weir, and Oliphant (one of them resided at Gosford, and the others in the neighbourhood), were occasionally visited by their royal and gallant admirer, which gave rise to the following satirical advice to his Majesty, from Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount, Lord Lyon. †

Sow not yere seed on Sandilands,
Spend not yere strength in Weir,
And ride not on yere Oliphants,
For gawing o' yere gear.

[Of the nature of his Majesty's nocturnal excursions this, and the ballad beginning

There was a jolly beggar, and a begging he was bound,

will fully inform the reader; he indulged too in other rambles of a martial nature, of which the border still carries the tokens. James was at once a poet, a warrior, and a musician. Of his skill in ballad-making, "The Gaberlunzie Man" will be a lasting record.

THE pawky auld carle came o'er the lea,
Wi' many good e'ens and days to me,
Saying, Goodwife, for your courtesie,
Will ye lodge a silly poor man?
The night was cauld, the carle was wat,
And down ayont the ingle he sat;
My daughter's shoulders he 'gan to clap,
And cadgily ranted and sang.

O wow! quo' he, were I as free
As first when I saw this countrie,

* [A Wallet-man, or tinker, who appears to have been formerly a Jack-of-all-trades.]

† [Sir David was *Lion King-at-Arms*, under James V.]

How blyth and merry wad I be!
And I wad never think lang.
He grew canty, and she grew fain;
But little did her auld minny ken
What thir slee twa togither were say'n',
When wooing they were sae thrang.

And O! quo' he, and ye were as black
As e'er the crown of my daddy's hat,
'Tis I wad lay thee on my back,
And awa' wi' me thou shou'd gang.
And O! quo' she, an' I were as white,
As e'er the snaw lay on the dike,
I'd cleed me braw, and lady like,
And awa' with thee I'd gang.

Between the twa was made a plot;
They raise awee before the cock,
And wilily they shot the lock,
And fast to the bent are they gane.
Up in the morn the auld wife raise,
And at her leisure put on her claise;
Syne to the servant's bed she gaes,
To speer for the silly poor man.

She gaed to the bed where the beggar lay,
The strae was cauld, he was away,
She clapt her hand, cry'd, dulefu' day!
For some of our gear will be gane.
Some ran to coffer, and some to kist,
But nought was stown that cou'd be mist,
She danc'd her lane, cry'd, praise be blest!
I have lodg'd a leal poor man.

Since naething's awa', as we can learn,
The kirn 's to kirn, and milk to earn,
Gae but the house, lass, and wauken my bairn,
And bid her come quickly ben.
The servant gade where the daughter lay,
The sheets were cauld, she was away,
And fast to her goodwife did say,
She's aff with the Gaberlunzie-man.

O fy! gar ride, and fy! gar rin,
And haste ye find these traitors again;
For she's be burnt, and he's be slain,
The wearifu' Gaberlunzie-man.
Some rade upo' horse, some ran a foot,
The wife was wud, and out o' her wit,
She cou'd na gang, nor yet cou'd she sit,
But ay did curse and did ban.

Meantime far hind out o'er the lea,
Fu' snug in a glen where nane could see,
The twa, with kindly sport and glee,
Cut frae a new cheese a whang.
The priving was good, it pleas'd them baith;
To lo'e for ay, he gae her his aith:
Quo' she, to leave thee I will be laith,
My winsome Gaberlunzie man.

O kenn'd, my minnie, I were wi' you,
Ill-fardly wad she crook her mou',
Sic a poor man she'd never trow,
After the Gaberlunzie-man.
My dear, quo' he, ye're yet o'er young,
And ha' nae learn'd the beggar's tongue,
To follow me frae town to town,
And carry the gaberlunzie on.

Wi' cauk and keel I'll win your bread,
And spindles and whorles for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed,
To carry the gaberlunzie on.
I'll bow my leg, and crook my knee,
And draw a black clout o'er my e'e;
A cripple, or blind, they will ca' me,
While we shall be merry and sing.

This very graphic song is printed as the composition of James V. of Scotland. "A prince," says Percy, "whose character, for wit and libertinism, bears a great resemblance to that of his gay successor, Charles II. He was noted," the Bishop adds, "for strolling about his dominions in disguise, and for his frequent gallantries with country girls. Two adventures of this kind he hath celebrated with his own pen, viz., in the Gaberlunzie-man, and The Jolly Beggar."

"I know not," says Cunningham, "where a more lively picture of living life, or a story of rustic intrigue, told with such *naïveté* and discretion, is to be found, than in the above song."]

The black Eagle.

THIS song is by Dr. Fordyce, whose merits as a prose writer are well known.

HARK! yonder eagle lonely wails;
His faithful bosom grief assails;
Last night I heard him in my dream,
When death and woe were all the theme.
Like that poor bird I make my moan,
I grieve for dearest Delia gone;
With him to gloomy rocks I fly,
He mourns for love, and so do I.

'Twas mighty love that tam'd his breast,
'Tis tender grief that breaks his rest;
He droops his wings, he hangs his head,
Since she he fondly lov'd was dead.
With Delia's breath my joy expir'd,
'Twas Deila's smiles my fancy fir'd;
Like that poor bird, I pine, and prove
Nought can supply the place of love.

Dark as his feathers was the fate
That robb'd him of his darling mate;
Dimm'd is the lustre of his eye,
That wont to gaze the sun-bright sky.

To him is now for ever lost
The heart-felt bliss he once could boast;
Thy sorrows, hapless bird, display
An image of my soul's dismay.

Dr. Fordyce perished at sea in the year 1755.]

Johnnie Cope.

THIS satirical song was composed to commemorate General Cope's defeat at Preston Pans, in 1745, when he marched against the Clans.

The air was the tune of an old song, of which I have heard some verses, but now only remember the title, which was,

Will ye go the coals in the morning.

[The following is the old song to which Burns refers:—

I.

COPE sent a challenge frae Dunbar—
Charlie, meet me, an ye daur,
And I'll learn you the art of war,
If you'll meet me in the morning.

CHORUS.

Hey Johnnie Cope, are ye waking yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were waking I would wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

II.

When Charlie look'd the letter upon,
He drew his sword the scabbard from,
Come follow me, my merry merry men,
To meet Johnnie Cope i' the morning.

III.

Now, Johnnie Cope, be as good 's your word,
And try our fate wi' fire and sword,
And dinna tak wing like a frighten'd bird,
That's chas'd frae its nest i' the morning.

IV.

When Johnnie Cope he heard of this,
He thought it wadna be amiss
To hae a horse in readiness
To flee awa' i' the morning.

V.

Fy Johnnie, now get up and rin,
The Highland bagpipes make a din,
It's best to sleep in a hale skin,
For 'twill be a bluidie morning.

VI.

Yon's no the took o' England's drum,
But it's the war-pipes deadly strum;
And poues the claymore and the gun—
It will be a bluidy morning.

VII.

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,
They speer'd at him "Where's a' your men?"
"The deil confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' i' the morning."

VIII.

Now, Johnnie, trouth ye was na blate,
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait,
Sae early in the morning.

IX.

Ah! faith, quo' Johnnie, I got a fleg,
With their claymores and philabeg;
If I face them again, deil break my leg,
Sae I wish you a good morning.

Hey Johnnie Cope, are ye waking yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were waking I would wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

When Cope fled, the fleetness of his horse carried him foremost, upon which a Scotsman sarcastically complimented him, "God, Sir, but ye hae won the race, win the battle wha like!"]

Cease, cease, my dear Friend to explore.

THE song is by Dr. Blacklock; I believe, but I am not quite certain that the air is his too.

[There are some pretty lines and agreeable thoughts in this song:—

CEASE, cease, my dear friend to explore
From whence and how piercing my smart;
Let the charms of the nymph I adore
Excuse and interpret my heart.
Then how much I admire ye shall prove,
When like me ye are taught to admire,
And imagine how boundless my love,
When you number the charms that inspire.

Than sunshine more dear to my sight,
To my life more essential than air,
To my soul she is perfect delight,
To my sense all that's pleasing and fair.
The swains, who her beauty behold,
With transport applaud every charm,
And swear that the breast must be cold
Which a beam so intense cannot warm.

Does my boldness offend my dear maid?
Is my fondness loquacious and free?
Are my visits too frequently paid?
Or my converse unworthy of thee?
Yet when grief was too big for my breast,
And labour'd in sighs to complain,
Its struggles I oft have supprest,
And silence impos'd on my pain.

Ah, Strephon, how vain thy desire,
Thy numbers and music how vain,
While merit and fortune conspire
The smiles of the nymph to obtain.
Yet cease to upbraid the soft choice,
Tho' it ne'er should determine for thee;
If my heart in her joy may rejoice,
Unhappy thou never canst be.

Auld Robin Gray.

THIS air was formerly called, "The Bridegroom greets when the Sun gangs down." The words are by Lady Ann Lindsay, of the Balcarras family.

[WHEN the sheep are in the fauld, and a' the kye at hame,
And a' the weary warld to sleep are gane:
The waes of my heart fa' in show'rs frae my e'e,
When my gudeman sleeps sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and he sought me for his bride,
But saving a crown he had naething else beside;
To make that crown a pound, my Jamie gade to sea,
And the crown and the pound were baith for me.

He hadna been gane a year and a day,
When my father brak his arm, and my Jamie at the sea, [away;
My mither she fell sick, and our cow was stown
And auld Robin Gray came a courting to me.

My father coudna work, and my mither coudna spin, [win;
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I coudna
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e,
Said, "Jenny, *for their sakes*, O marry me."

My heart it said nae, for I look'd for Jamie back, [a wrack;
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was
The ship it was a wrack, why didna Jenny die,
And why do I live to say, wae's me?

My father argu'd sair, tho' my mither didna speak, [break;
She lookit in my face till my heart was like to
Sae they gi'ed him my hand, tho' my heart was in the sea,
And auld Robin Gray is gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When, sitting sae mournfully at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith, for I coudna think it he, [thee."
'Till he said, "I'm come back for to marry

O sair did we greet, and mickle did we say,
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away;
I wish I were dead! but I'm no like to die,
And why do I live to say, wae's me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin,
I darena think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin;
But I'll do my best a gudewife to be,
For auld Robin Gray is kind unto me.]*

Donald and Flora.

THIS is one of those fine Gaelic tunes, preserved from time immemorial in the Hebrides; they seem to be the ground-work of many of our finest Scots pastoral tunes. The words of this song were written to commemorate the unfortunate expedition of General Burgoyne in America, in 1777.

[This fine ballad is the composition of Hector Macneil, Esq., author of the celebrated poem, "Will and Jean," and other popular works. Hector Macneil was looked up to as Scotland's hope in song when Burns died; his poems flew over the north like wildfire, and half a dozen editions were bought up in a year. The Donald of the song was Captain Stewart, who fell at the battle of Saratoga, and Flora was a young lady of Athole, to whom he was betrothed.]

WHEN merry hearts were gay,
Careless of aught but play,
Poor Flora slipt away,
Sad'ning to Mora;†

* [Pinkerton, after observing that none of the "Scotch amatory ballads are written by ladies;" and that the "profligacy of manners which always reigns before women can so utterly forget all sense of decency and propriety as to commence authors, is yet almost unknown in Scotland," adds, in a note, that "there is indeed, of very late years, one insignificant exception to this rule; 'Auld Robin Gray,' having got his silly psalm set to soporific music, is, to the credit of our taste, popular for the day. But after lulling some good-natured audiences asleep, he will soon fall asleep himself." Ritson, with a becoming boldness and indignation at the author of these ungracious and ungallant remarks, steps forward with his accustomed bantom-cock courage, and thus strikes at the hard forehead of Pinkerton. "Alas! this 'silly psalm' will continue to be sung, 'to the credit of our taste,' long after the author of this equally ridiculous and malignant paragraph shall be as completely forgotten as yesterday's Ephemeron, and his printed trash be only occasionally discernible at the bottom of a pie. Of the twenty-four Scottish song-writers whose names are preserved, four, if not five, are females; and, as poetesses, two more might be added to the number.

"At the time Mr. Pinkerton made this unmanly remark, he must have been aware that an examination of the characters of our principal female authors would have convinced him of its fallacy."]

† [Mora is the name of a small valley in Athole, so named by the two lovers.]

Loose flow'd her coal black hair,
Quick heav'd her bosom bare,
As thus to the troubled air
She vented her sorrow :—

" Loud howls the northern blast,
Bleak is the dreary waste ;
Haste thee, O ! Donald, haste,
Haste to thy Flora !
Twice twelve long months are o'er,
Since, on a foreign shore,
You promis'd to fight no more,
But meet me in Mora.

" ' Where now is Donald dear ?'
Maids cry with taunting sneer ;
' Say is he still sincere
To his lov'd Flora ?'
Parents upbraid my moan,
Each heart is turn'd to stone ;
Ah ! Flora, thou'rt now alone,
Friendless in Mora !

" Come then, O come away !
Donald, no longer stay ;—
Where can my rover stray
From his lov'd Flora ?
Ah ! sure he ne'er can be
False to his vows and me—
O, Heaven ! is not yonder he
Bounding o'er Mora ?"

" Never, ah ! wretched fair !
(Sigh'd the sad messenger,)
Never shall Donald mair
Meet his lov'd Flora !
Cold, cold beyond the main,
Donald, thy love, lies slain :
He sent me to sooth thy pain,
Weeping in Mora.

" Well fought our gallant men,
Headed by brave Burgoyne,
Our heroes were thrice led on
To British glory.
But ah ! tho' our foes did flee,
Sad was the loss to thee,
While every fresh victory
Drown'd us in sorrow.

" Here, take this trusty blade,
(Donald expiring said,)
' Give it to yon dear maid,
Weeping in Mora.

Tell her, oh Allan ! tell,
Donald thus bravely fell,
And that in his last farewell
He thought on his Flora.' "

Mute stood the trembling fair,
Speechless with wild despair,
Then, striking her bosom bare,
Sigh'd out, ' Poor Flora !'
Oh ! Donald ! oh, well a day !
Was all the fond heart could say ;
At length the sound died away
Feebly, in Mora.]

The Captive Ribband.

THIS air is called " Robie donna Gorach."

[The song of " The Captive Ribband" has been generally imputed to Burns. Here are the words—the reader may judge for himself: they are adapted to a Gaelic air, called *Robie donna Gorach*, or *Daft Robin*. This air is evidently a slight alteration of the fine old tri ple tune, entitled *Earl Douglas's Lament*.

DEAR Myra, the captive Ribband's mine,
'Twas all my faithful love could gain ;
And would you ask me to resign
The sole reward that crowns my pain ?

Go, bid the hero who has run
Thro' fields of death to gather fame,
Go, bid him lay his laurels down,
And all his well-earn'd praise disclaim.

The ribband shall its freedom lose,
Lose all the bliss it had with you,
And share the fate I would impose
On thee, wert thou my captive too.

It shall upon my bosom live,
Or clasp me in a close embrace ;
And at its fortune if you grieve,
Retrieve its doom and take its place.]

The Bridal o't.

THIS song is the work of a Mr. Alexander Ross,* late schoolmaster at Lochlee ; and author

* ["The reader will be pleased to find," says Cromek, "from the following communication to the editor, by Mrs. Murray, of Bath (authoress of 'Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch,'), that Mr. Ross was one of the very few writers that practised what they taught.

"'I knew a good deal of Mr. Ross, author of 'The Fortunate Shepherdess,' but it was many years ago :—I still remember him with respect, as a man of most amiable character. His genius and talents speak for themselves in the above-mentioned beautiful little poem, and one cannot help regretting that such abilities were only born to 'blush unseen, and waste their sweetness on the desert air ;' for in truth his humble abode was little better than a desert, though not inhabited by savages ; nothing on earth being less savage than a mere uncultivated Highlander. I speak from the experience of many years of the early part of my life, which I had the happiness of spending in the North Highlands of Scotland, the country of 'Honest men and bonny lasses.'

"Mr. Ross was also author of two excellent songs, called 'What ails the Lasses at me ?' and 'The Rock and the wee pickle tow.' They are printed in the Museum immediately after 'The Bridal o't.' He was born about the year 1700. His father was a farmer in the parish of Kincardine O'Neil, Aberdeen-shire. His first settlement was at Birs, as parochial

of a beautiful Scots poem, called "The Fortunate Shepherdess."

[They say that Jockey'll speed weel o't,
They say that Jockey'll speed weel o't,
For he grows brawer ilka day—
I hope we'll hae a bridal o't:
For yesternight, nae farder gane,
The backhouse at the side wa' o't,
He there wi' Meg was mirden seen—
I hope we'll hae a bridal o't.

An we had but a bridal o't,
An we had but a bridal o't,
We'd leave the rest unto gude luck,
Altho' there should betide ill o't:
For bridal days are merry times,
And young folks like the coming o't,
And scribblers they bang up their rhymes,
And pipers they the bumming o't.

The lasses like a bridal o't,
The lasses like a bridal o't,
Their braws maun be in rank and file,
Altho' that they should guide ill o't:
The boddom o' the kist is then
Turn'd up unto the inmost o't,
The end that held the kecks sae clean,
Is now become the teemest o't.

The bangster at the threshing o't,
The bangster at the threshing o't,
Afore it comes is fidgin fain,
And ilka day's a clashing o't:
He'll sell his jerkin for a groat,
His linder for anither o't,
And e'er he want to clear his shot,
His sark'll pay the tither o't.

The pipers and the fiddlers o't,
The pipers and the fiddlers o't,
Can smell a bridal unco' far,
And like to be the middlers o't;
Fan* thick and threefold they convene,
Ilk ane envies the tither o't,
And wishes nane but him alane
May ever see anither o't.

Fan they hae done wi' eating o't,
Fan they hae done wi' eating o't,
For dancing they gae to the green,
And aiblins to the beating o't:
He dances best that dances fast,
And loups at ilka reesing o't,
And claps his hands frae hough to hough,
And furls about the feezings o't.]

schoolmaster, about the year 1733. He removed to Lochlee, Forfar-shire, where he died in May, 1783, after residing fifty years in the centre of the Grampians, almost secluded from the converse of men and books. Mr. Ross's grandson, the Rev. Alexander Thomson, gives the following account of him in a letter to Mr. Campbell, author of 'An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland,' dated Lintrethen, 14th June, 1798.—'He (Ross) was a plain man, had the character of being a good schoolmaster, was very religious, which appeared by his behaviour as much as by his profession. He was an excellent Latin scholar, and wrote with considerable accuracy, till the days of old age and infirmity, when he composed a poem, entitled 'The Orphan,' and attempted to publish it at Aberdeen, with some other little performances, which, on account of their inaccuracy, of which the worthy author was not so sensible as he would have formerly been, he was advised by Dr. Beattie, one of his best friends, not to publish.'"]

* *Fan*, when—the dialect of Angus.

Todlen Hame.

This is perhaps the first bottle song that ever was composed. The author's name is unknown.

[When I've a saxpence under my thumb,
Then I'll get credit in ilka town:
But ay when I'm poor they bid me gae by;
O! poverty parts good company.
Todlen hame, todlen hame,
Coudna my love come todlen hame?

Fair fa' the goodwife, and send her good sale,
She gi'es us white bannocks to drink her ale,
Syne if her tippeny chance to be sma',
We'll tak a good scour o't, and ca't awa'.
Todlen hame, todlen hame,
As round as a neep come todlen hame.

My kimmer and I lay down to sleep,
And twa pint-stoups at our bed-feet; [dry:
And ay when we waken'd, we drank them
What think ye of my wee kimmer and I?
Todlen but, and todlen ben,
Sae round as my love comes todlen hame.

Leeze me on liquor, my todlen dow,
Ye're ay sae good humour'd when weeting your mou';
When sober sae sour, ye'll fight wi' a flee,
That 'tis a blyth sight to the bairns and me,
When todlen hame, todlen hame, [hame.]
When round as a neep ye come todlen

The Shepherd's Preference.

This song is Dr. Blacklock's.—I don't know how it came by the name, but the oldest appellation of the air was, "Whistle and I'll come to you my lad."

It has little affinity to the tune commonly known by that name.

[In May, when the daisies appear on the green,
And flow'rs in the field and the forest are seen; [up sprung,
Where lilies bloom'd bonnie, and hawthorns
A pensive young shepherd oft whistled and sung. [flow'rs,
But neither the shades nor the sweets of the
Nor the blackbirds that warbled in blossoming bowers;

Could brighten his eye or his ear entertain,
For love was his pleasure, and love was his pain.

The shepherd thus sung, while his flocks all around [sound;
Drew nearer and nearer, and sigh'd to the
Around, as in chains, lay the beasts of the wood,
With pity disarm'd, and with music subdu'd.
Young Jessy is fair as the spring's early flow'r, [bow'r;
And Mary sings sweet as the bird in her
But Peggy is fairer and sweeter than they,
With looks like the morning—with smiles like the day.

The blind bard continues the strain through three other verses: he had a fine ear, but external nature had begun to fade and grow dim in his remembrance.]

John O' Badenyond.*

THIS excellent song is the composition of my worthy friend, old Skinner, at Linshart.

["The songs of Skinner deserve to the full the eulogiums of Burns. Our ancestors tolerated strains of a length that would weary out the patience of their descendants in singing. But then amusements in those days were few, and he who could sing a long song, or recite a long story, was of some account: at present we have so multiplied our enjoyments that he who would sing John of Badenyond, or one of Robin Hood's Ballads, would be looked upon as one who desired to rob us of variety in pleasure."—CUNNINGHAM.

WHEN first I cam to be a man
Of twenty years or so,
I thought myself a handsome youth,
And fain the world would know;
In best attire I stept abroad,
With spirits brisk and gay,
And here, and there, and every where,
Was like a morn in May.
No care had I, nor fear of want,
But rambled up and down,
And for a beau I might have pass'd
In country or in town;
I still was pleas'd where'er I went,
And when I was alone,
I tun'd my pipe and pleas'd myself
Wi' John o' Badenyon'.

Now in the days of youthful prime,
A mistress I must find,
For *love*, they say, gives one an air,
And ev'n improves the mind:
On Phillis fair, above the rest,
Kind fortune fix'd my eyes;
Her piercing beauty struck my heart,
And she became my choice:
To Cupid then with hearty pray'r,
I offer'd many a vow;
And danc'd, and sung, and sigh'd, and swore,
As other lovers do:
But, when at last I breath'd my flame,
I found her cold as stone;
I left the jilt, and tun'd my pipe,
To John o' Badenyon'.

When *love* had thus my heart beguil'd
With foolish hopes and vain;
To *friendship's* port I steer'd my course,
And laugh'd at lover's pain;
A friend I got by lucky chance,
'Twas something like divine,
An honest friend's a precious gift,
And such a gift was mine:
And now, whatever might betide,
A happy man was I,
In any strait I knew to whom
I freely might apply:
A strait soon came, my friend I try'd;
He heard, and spurn'd my moan;
I hi'd me home, and pleas'd myself
With John o' Badenyon'.

I thought I should be wiser next,
And would a *patriot* turn,
Began to doat on Johnny Wilkes,
And cry up Parson Horne.
Their manly spirit I admir'd,
And prais'd their noble zeal,
Who had with flaming tongue and pen
Maintain'd the public weal;
But e'er a month or two had past,
I found myself betray'd,
'Twas *self* and *party* after all,
For all the stir they made;
At last I saw these factious knaves
Insult the very throne,
I curs'd them a', and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon'.

And now, ye youngsters every where
Who want to make a show,
Take heed in time, nor vainly hope
For happiness below;
What you may fancy pleasure here
Is but an empty name,
For girls and friends, and books, and so,
You'll find them all the same.
Then be advis'd, and warning take
From such a man as me,
I'm neither Pope, nor Cardinal,
Nor one of high degree:

* [The words of Burns's celebrated Dirge "Man was made to Mourn," were composed to this tune.]

You'll find displeasure everywhere;
Then do as I have done,
E'en tune your pipe, and please yourself
With John o' Badenyon'.]

A Waukrife Minnie.*

I PICKED up this old song and tune from a country girl in Nithsdale.—I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland:—

"WHARE are you gaun, my bonnie lass?
Whare are you gaun, my hinnie?"
She answer'd me right saucilie—
An errand for my minnie.

"O whare live ye, my bonnie lass?
O whare live ye, my hinnie?"—
By yon burn-side, gin ye maun ken,
In a wee house wi' my minnie.

But I foor up the glen at e'en,
To see my bonnie lassie;
And lang before the grey morn cam,
She was na hauf sae saucie.

O weary fa' the waukrife cock,
And the foumart lay his crawin!
He wauken'd the auld wife frae her sleep,
A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wat she raise,
And o'er the bed she brought her;
And wi' a mickle hazle rung
She made her a weel pay'd dochter.

"O fare thee weel, my bonnie lass!
O fare thee weel, my hinnie!
Thou art a gay and a bonnie lass,
But thou hast a waukrife minnie."†

The Editor thinks it respectful to the poet to preserve the verses he thus recovered.

R. B.

["I have frequently heard this song sung in Nithsdale—and sung too with many variations. I am of opinion, nevertheless, that a large portion of it is the work of Burns himself. That several of the verses have been amended by him I have not the least doubt. It may gratify some to know that he lessened the indelicacy without impairing the wit of the song: his omissions too are on the same side: the concluding verse may be quoted—I have no wish to restore it—

"O though thy hair were hanks o' gowd,
And thy lips o' drappin hinnie;
Thou hast gotten the clog that winna cling,
For a' thy waukrife minnie."

CUNNINGHAM.]

* A watchful mother.

† [The way that I have always heard this song sung ended thus:—

"*But I'll come back an' see you yet,*
For a' your wauk rife minnie."—HOGG.]

Tullochgorum.

THIS FIRST of SONGS is the master-piece of my old friend SKINNER. He was passing the day, at the town of Cullen, I think it was [he should have said *Ellon*], in a friend's house, whose name was Montgomery. Mrs. Montgomery observing, *en passant*, that the beautiful reel of *Tullochgorum* wanted words, she begged them of Mr. Skinner, who gratified her wishes, and the wishes of every lover of Scottish song, in this most excellent ballad.

These particulars I had from the author's son, Bishop Skinner, at Aberdeen.

I.

COME gie's a sang, Montgomery cry'd,
And lay your disputes all aside,
What signifies't for folks to chide
For what was done before them:
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
Whig and Tory all agree,
To drop their Whig-mig-morum.
Let Whig and Tory all agree
To spend the night in mirth and glee,
And cheerful sing, alang wi' me,
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

II.

O, Tullochgorum's my delight,
It gars us a' in ane unite,
And ony sumph that keeps up spite,
In conscience I abhor him:
For blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
Blythe and cheerie, blythe and cheerie,
Blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
And mak' a happy quorum,
For blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
As lang as we hae breath to draw,
And dance, till we be like to fa',
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

III.

What needs there be sae great a fraise,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays?
I wadna gie our ain Strathspeys
For half a hunder score o' em.
They're dowf and dowie at the best,
Dowf and dowie, dowf and dowie,
Dowf and dowie at the best,
Wi' a' their variorum;
They're dowf and dowie at the best,
Their *allegros* and a' the rest,

They canna' please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum.

IV.

Let warldly worms their minds oppress
Wi' fears o' want and double cess,
And sullen sots themsells distress
Wi' keeping up decorum:
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Sour and sulky, sour and sulky,
Sour and sulky shall we sit
Like old philosophorum?
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Wi' neither sense, nor mirth, nor wit,
Nor ever try to shake a fit
To the Reel o' Tullochgorum?

V.

May choicest blessings e'er attend
Each honest, open-hearted friend,
And calm and quiet be his end
And all that's good watch o'er him!
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Peace and plenty, peace and plenty,
Peace and plenty be his lot,
And dainties a great store o' em;
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Unstain'd by any vicious spot,
And may he never want a groat,
That's fond o' Tullochgorum!

VI.

But for the sullen frampish fool,
That loves to be oppression's tool,
May envy gnaw his rotten soul,
And discontent devour him!
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,
Dool and sorrow be his chance;
And nane say, Wae's me for him!
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Wi' a' the ills that come frae France,
Whae'er he be that winna dance
The Reel o' Tullochgorum!

Auld Lang Syne.

RAMSAY here, as is usual with him, has taken the idea of the song, and the first line, from the old fragment, which may be seen in the "Museum," vol. v.

[In Watson's Collection of Scots Poems, Part III., Edinburgh, 1711, 8vo., there is a poem entitled "Old Long syne," written about the middle of the 17th century. It contains ten stanzas, of which the first and sixth may serve as a specimen. It is probably an English ballad, founded on one of an earlier date:—

SHOULD old acquaintance be forgot
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone?
Is thy kind heart now grown so cold,
In that loving breast of thine,
That thou canst never once reflect
On old-long-syne?

If e'er I have a house, my dear,
That truly is call'd mine,
And can afford but country cheer,
Or ought that's good therein;
Tho' thou wert rebel to the king,
And beat with wind and rain,
Assure thyself of welcome love,
For old-long-syne.]

The Ewie wi' the crooked Horn.

ANOTHER excellent song of old Skinner's.

[The "Poor Mailie" of Burns is said to have been suggested by "The Ewie wi' the crooked horn" of Skinner—with what truth the poem itself will show. The simplicity, tenderness, pathos, and humour of the verses of the bard of Kyle far exceed those of the poet of Linshart.

I.

O WERE I able to rehearse
My Ewie's praise in proper verse,
I'd sound it out as loud and fierce
As ever piper's drone could blaw.
The Ewie wi' the crookit horn
Weel deserv'd baith garse and corn;
Sic a Ewie ne'er was born
Hereabout, nor far awa',
Sic a Ewie ne'er was born
Hereabout, nor far awa'.

II.

I never needed tar nor keil
To mark her upo' hip or heel,
Her crookit horn did just as weel
To ken her by amo' them a';
She never threaten'd scab nor rot,
But keepit ay her ain jog trot,
Baith to the fauld and to the cot,
Was never sweir to lead nor ca';
Baith to the fauld and to the cot,
Was never sweir to lead nor ca'.

III.

Cauld nor hunger never dang her,
Wind nor rain could never wrang her,
Ance she lay an ouk and langer,
Out aneath a wreath o' snaw:
Whan ither Ewies lap the dyke,
And ate the kail for a' the tyke,

My Ewie never play'd the like,
But tyc'd about the barn yard wa' ;
My Ewie never play'd the like,
But tyc'd about the barn yard wa'.

IV.

A better nor a thriftier beast
Nae honest man cou'd weel hae wist,
Puir silly thing, she never mist
To hae ilk year a lamb or twa.
The first she had I ga'e to Jock,
To be to him a kind of stock,
And now the laddie has a flock
Of mair nor thirty head to ca'.
And now the laddie has a flock
Of mair nor thirty head to ca'.

V.

The neist I ga'e to Jean ; and now
The bairn's sae braw, has fauld sae fu',
That lads sae thick come here to woo,
They're fain to sleep on hay or straw.
I lookit aye at even' for her,
For fear the foumart might devour her,
Or some mischanter had come o'er her,
Gin the beastie bade awa ;
Or some mischanter had come o'er her,
Gin the beastie bade awa.

VI.

Yet last ouk, for a' my keeping,
(Wha can speak it without weeping ?)
A villain cam when I was sleeping,
And sta' my Ewie, horn and a' ;
I sought her sair upo' the morn,
And down aneath a buss o' thorn
I got my Ewie's crookit horn,
But ah, my Ewie was awa'.
I got my Ewie's crookit horn,
But ah, my Ewie was awa'.

VII.

O ! gin I had the loun that did it,
Sworn I have as weel as said it,
Tho' a' the warld shou'd forbid it,
I wad gie his neck a thra' :
I never met wi' sic a turn,
As this sin' ever I was born,
My Ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Puir sillie Ewie stown awa',
My Ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Puir silly Ewie stown awa'.]

Hughie Graham.

THERE are several editions of this ballad.—This, here inserted, is from oral tradition in Ayr-shire, where, when I was a boy, it was a popular song.—It originally had a simple old tune, which I have forgotten.

OUR lords are to the mountains gane,
A hunting o' the fallow deer,
And they have grippet Hughie Graham,
For stealing o' the bishop's mare.

And they ha'e tied him hand and foot,
And led him up, thro' Stirling toun;
The lads and lasses met him there,
Cried, Hughie Graham, thou art a loon.

O lowse my right hand free, he says,
And put my braid sword in the same ;
He's no in Stirling toun this day
Daur tell the tale to Hughie Graham.

Up then bespake the brave Whitefoord,
As he sat by the bishop's knee,
Five hundred white stots I'll gie you,
If ye'll let Hughie Graham gae free.

O haud your tongue, the bishop says,
And wi' your pleading let me be ;
For tho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Hughie Graham this day shall die.

Up then bespake the fair Whitefoord,
As she sat by the bishop's knee ;
Five hundred white pence I'll gie you,
If ye'll gie Hughie Graham to me.

O haud your tongue now, lady fair,
And wi' your pleading let it be ;
Altho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
It's for my honour he maun die.

They've ta'en him to the gallows knowe,
He looked to the gallows tree,
Yet never colour left his cheek,
Nor ever did he blink his e'e.

At length he looked round about,
To see whatever he could spy :
And there he saw his auld father,
And he was weeping bitterly.

O haud your tongue, my father dear,
And wi' your weeping let it be ;
Thy weeping's sairer on my heart
Than a' that they can do to me.

And ye may gie my brother John
My sword that's bent in the middle clear ;
And let him come at twelve o'clock,
And see me pay the bishop's mare.

And ye may gie my brother James
My sword that's bent in the middle brown ;
And bid him come at four o'clock,
And see his brother Hugh cut down.

Remember me to Maggy my wife,
The neist time ye gang o'er the moor.
Tell her she staw the bishop's mare,
Tell her she was the bishop's whore.

And ye may tell my kith and kin,
I never did disgrace their blood;
And when they meet the bishop's cloak
To mak it shorter by the hood.

[Burns did not *choose* to be quite correct in stating that this copy of the ballad of "Hughie Graham" is printed from oral tradition in Ayr-shire. The fact is, that four of the stanzas are either altered or superadded by himself.

Of this number the third and eighth are original; the ninth and tenth have received his corrections. Perhaps pathos was never more touching than in the picture of the hero singling out his poor aged father from the crowd of spectators; and the simple grandeur of preparation for this afflicting circumstance, in the verse that immediately precedes it, is matchless.

That the reader may probably appreciate the value of Burns's touches, I here subjoin two verses from the most correct copy of the ballad, as it is printed in the "Border Minstrelsy."

He looked over his left shoulder
And for to see what he might see;
There was he aware of his auld father,
Came tearing his hair most piteouslie.

"O haud your tongue, my father," he says,
"And see that ye dinna weep for me!
For they may ravish me o' my life,
But they canna banish me from heaven hie."

CROMEK.]

A Southland Jenny.

THIS is a popular Ayr-shire song, though the notes were never taken down before. It, as well as many of the ballad tunes in this collection, was written from Mrs. Burns's voice.

["Southland Jenny" is older than the days of Allan Ramsay, for it is inserted in his "Tea Table Miscellany," with the letter Z annexed, to intimate its antiquity. It seems to be of southern manufacture, and probably owes its origin to one of those very ingenious persons who, in London, imitated the voice and manner of the northern muse, with the same happiness that Wallenstien's follower imitated the general:

"I grant that in trifles you hit it off,
You can spit like the Friedlander—ape his cough."

The first verse will be sample sufficient of this compound strain.

A Southland Jenny that was right bonnie,
She had for a suitor a Norlan' Johnnie;
But he was siccan a bashfu' wooer
That he could scarcely speak unto her.
But blinks o' her beauty, and hopes o' her siller,
Forc'd him at last to tell his mind till 'er;
My dear, quo' he, we'll nae longer tarry,
Gin ye can love me, let's o'er the muir and marry.]

My Tocher's the Jewel.*

THIS tune is claimed by Nathaniel Gow. It is notoriously taken from "The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre." It is also to be found, long prior to Nathaniel Gow's era, in Aird's "Selection of Airs and Marches," the first edition, under the name of "The Highway to Edinburgh."†

Then, Guidwife, count the Lawin'.

THE chorus of this is part of an old song, one stanza of which I recollect:—

EVERY day my wife tells me
That ale and brandy will ruin me;
But if gude liquor be my dead,
This shall be written on my head—
O, gudewife, count the lawin'.

The Soger Laddie.

THE first verse of this is old; the rest is by Ramsay. The tune seems to be the same with a slow air, called "Jacky Hume's Lament"—or, "The Hollin Buss"—or, "Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?"

[In Thomson's "Orpheus Caledonius," printed in 1725, both the music and words of "The Soger Laddie" may be found. The first four lines of the song have the true echo of the ancient minstrelsy.

MY soger laddie is over the sea,
And he'll bring gold and silver to me,
And when he comes hame he will make me his lady;
My blessings gang wi' him, my soger laddie

---

* *Tocher*—Marriage portion.

† ["This statement is incorrect. On referring to 'Neil Gow and Son's,' 2nd book, p. 18, it will be seen that it is unclaimed by Nathaniel Gow or any of his family. Mr. Gow found the tune in 'Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion,' book iii. p. 28, as a quick jig; it struck him that it would be pretty if slow; and, being without a name, he called it 'Lord Elcho's Favourite.' Oswald's book was published as long prior to Aird's era, as Aird's was to that of Gow."—CROMEK.]

My doughty laddie is handsome and brave,
And can as a soger and lover behave,
He's true to his country, to love he is steady;
There's few to compare wi' my soger laddie.

O shield him, ye Angels, frae death in alarms,
Return him with laurels to my longing arms,
Syne frae all my care ye'll pleasantly free me,
When back to my wishes my soger ye gie me.

O soon may his honours bloom fair on his brow,
As quickly they must, if he get but his due;
For in noble actions his courage is ready,
Which makes me delight in my soger laddie.]

Where wad bonnie Annie lie?

THE old name of this tune is,—

Whare'll our gude-man lie?

A silly old stanza of it runs thus—

O WHARE'LL our gudeman lie,
Gudeman lie, gudeman lie,
O whare'll our gudeman lie,
Till he shute o'er the simmer?

Up amang the hen-bawks,
The hen-bawks, the hen-bawks,
Up amang the hen-bawks,
Amang the rotten timmer.

[Ramsay's song is as follows:—

O WHERE wad bonnie Annie lie?
Alane nae mair ye maunna lie;
Wad ye a gudeman try,
Is that the thing ye're lacking?
O can a lass sae young as I
Venture on the bridal tye?
Syne down wi' a gudeman lie,
I'm fley'd he'd keep me waukin.

Never judge until ye try,
Mak me your gudeman, I
Shanna hinder you to lie,
And sleep till ye be weary.
What if I shou'd wauking lie,
When the ho boys are gaun by,
Will ye tent me when I cry
My dear, I'm faint and eiry?

In my bosom thou shalt lie,
When thou waukrife art, or dry,
Healthy cordial standing by,
Shall presently revive thee.
To your will I then comply;
Join us, priest, and let me try,
How I'll wi' a gudeman lie,
Wha can a cordial gie me.]

Galloway Tam.

I HAVE seen an interlude (acted on a wedding) to this tune, called "The Wooing of the Maiden." These entertainments are now much worn out in this part of Scotland. Two are still retained in Nithsdale, viz. "Silly Puir Auld Glenae," and this one, "The Wooing of the Maiden."

[Galloway Tam is a fellow of merit in his way, as the song in his honour will shew:

I.

O GALLOWAY Tam cam here to woo,
We'd better hae gi'en him the bawsent cow,
For our lass Bess may curse and ban
The wanton wit o' Galloway Tam.
A cannie tongue and a glance fu' gleg,
A boordly back and a lordly leg,
A heart like a fox, and a look like a lamb—
O, these are the marks o' Galloway Tam.

II.

O Galloway Tam came here to shear,
We'd better hae gi'en him the gude grey meare,
He kiss'd the gudewife & he dang'd the gudeman,
And these are the tricks o' Galloway Tam.
He ow'd the kirk a twalmonth's score,
And he doff'd his bonnet at the door;
The loon cried out wha sung the psalm,
"There's room on the stool for Galloway Tam!"

III.

Ye lasses o' Galloway, frank and fair,
Tak tent o' your hearts and something mair;
And bar your doors, your windows steek,
For he comes stealing like night and sleep:
O nought frae Tam but wae ye'll win,
He'll sing ye dumb and he'll dance ye blin';
And aff your balance he'll cowp ye then,
Tak tent o' the deil and Galloway Tam.

IV.

"Sir," quoth Mess John, "the wanton deil
Has put his birn 'boon gospel kiel,
And bound yere cloots in his black ban':"
"For mercy loos't!" quo' Galloway Tam.
"In our kirk-fauld we maun ye bar,
And smear your fleece wi' cov'nant tar,
And pettle ye up a dainty lamb."
"Among the yowes," quo' Galloway Tam.

V.

Eas'd of a twalmonth's graceless deeds,
He gaylie doff'd his sackcloth weeds;
An' 'mang the maidens he laughing cam—
"Tak tent o' your hearts," quo' Galloway Tam
A cannie tongue and a glance fu' gleg,
A boordly back and a lordly leg,
A heart like a fox, and a look like a lamb—
O, these are the marks o' Galloway Tam.]

As I cam down by yon Castle Wa'.

THIS is a very popular Ayr-shire song.

[It has no doubt been greatly amended by Burns. Both music and words were unknown till he sent them to the "Museum.'

As I cam down by yon castle wa',
And in by yon garden green,
O there I spied a bonnie bonnie lass,
But the flower-borders were us between.

A bonnie bonnie lassie she was,
As ever mine eyes did see;
O five hundred pounds would I give,
For to have such a pretty bride as thee.

To have such a pretty bride as me!
Young man, ye are sairly mista'en;
Tho' ye were king o' fair Scotland,
I wad disdain to be your queen.

Talk not so very high, bonnie lass,
O talk not so very, very high;
The man at the fair, that wad sell,
He maun learn at the man that wad buy.

I trust to climb a far higher tree,
And herry a far richer nest.
Tak this advice o' me, bonnie lass,
Humility wad set thee best.]

Lord Ronald, my Son.

THIS air, a very favourite one in Ayr-shire, is evidently the original of Lochaber. In this manner most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel, or musical shepherd, composed the simple artless original air; which being picked up by the more learned musician, took the improved form it bears.

[The complete ballad of "Lord Ronald" may be found under the name of "Lord Randal," in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The hero of the song was poisoned—he ate a dish of adders instead of eels: this is intimated in a stray verse, which should be restored to its place, as, without it, the ballad is incomplete.

AND where did they catch them, Lord Ronald my son? [young man?
And where did they catch them, my handsome
Beneath the bracken-bush, mother; make my bed soon, [down."]
For I'm wearied wi' hunting, and fain wad lie

O'er the Moor amang the Heather.

THIS song is the composition of Jean Glover, a girl who was not only a wh-re, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the Correction Houses in the West. She was born I believe in Kilmarnock,—I took the song down from her singing, as she was strolling through the country, with a slight-of-hand blackguard.

[COMIN' thro' the craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie blooming heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither.

Says I, my dearie, where is thy hame,
In moor or dale pray tell me whether?
She says, I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the blooming heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunny was the weather,
She left her flocks at large to rove
Amang the bonnie blooming heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

While thus we lay she sang a sang,
Till echo rang a mile and farther,
And ay the burden o' the sang
Was o'er the moor amang the heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

She charm'd my heart, and aye sinsyne,
I could na think on any ither;
By sea and sky she shall be mine!
The bonnie lass amang the heather.
O'er the moor, &c.]

To the Rose-bud.

THIS song is the composition of one Johnson, a joiner in the neighbourhood of Belfast. The tune is by Oswald, altered, evidently, from "Jockie's Grey Breeks."

[ALL hail to thee, thou bawmy bud,
Thou charming child o' simmer, hail;
Ilk fragrant thorn and lofty wood
Does nod thy welcome to the vale.

See on thy lovely faulded form,
Glad Phœbus smiles wi' cheering eye,
While on thy head the dewy morn
Has shed the tears o' silent joy.

The tuneful tribes frae yonder bower,
Wi' sangs of joy thy presence hail;
Then haste, thou bawmy fragrant flower,
And gie thy bosom to the gale.

And see the fair industrious bee,
With airy wheel and soothing hum,
Flies ceaseless round thy parent tree,
While gentle breezes trembling come.

If ruthless Liza pass this way,
She'll pu' thee frae thy thorny stem;
Awhile thou'lt grace her virgin breast,
But soon thou'lt fade, my bonny gem.

Ah, short, too short, thy rural reign,
And yield to fate, alas! thou must:
Bright emblem of the virgin train,
Thou blooms, alas! to mix wi' dust.

Sae bonny Liza hence may learn,
Wi' every youthfu' maiden gay,
That beauty, like the simmer's rose,
In time shall wither and decay.]

Thou art gane awa.

THIS tune is the same with "Haud awa frae me, Donald."

[Both tune and words of "Thou art gane awa" have been modernized, and not unskilfully: the last verse is the best.

THO' you've been false, yet while I live
I'll lo'e nae maid but thee, Mary;
Let friends forget as I forgive
Thy wrangs to them and me, Mary.
So then farewell!—of this be sure,
Since you've been false to me, Mary,
For a' the world I'll not endure
Half what I've done for thee, Mary.]

The Tears I shed must ever fall.

THIS song of genius was composed by a Miss Cranstoun. It wanted four lines, to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the first four of the last stanza.

[Miss Cranstoun was the sister of George, Lord Cranstoun, a Lord of Session in Scotland. She became the second wife of one as accomplished as herself, the celebrated Professor Dugald Stewart: of her poetic genius this exquisite song will long continue a striking proof. She died on the 28th of July, 1838, at the age of seventy-one.

THE tears I shed must ever fall;
I weep not for an absent swain,
For time can past delights recall,
And parted lovers meet again.
I weep not for the silent dead,
Their toils are past, their sorrows o'er,
And those they lov'd their steps shall tread,
And death shall join to part no more.

Though boundless oceans roll between,
If certain that his heart is near,
A conscious transport glads the scene,
Soft is the sigh and sweet the tear.
E'en when by death's cold hand remov'd,
We mourn the tenant of the tomb,
To think that ev'n in death he lov'd,
Can cheer the terrors of the gloom.

But bitter, bitter is the tear
Of her who slighted love bewails,
No hopes her gloomy prospect cheer,
No pleasing melancholy hails.
Her's are the pangs of wounded pride,
Of blasted hope, and wither'd joy:
The prop she lean'd on pierc'd her side,
The flame she fed burns to destroy.

In vain does memory renew
The scenes once ting'd in transport's dye;
The sad reverse soon meets the view,
And turns the thought to agony.
Ev'n conscious virtue cannot cure
The pangs to ev'ry feeling due;
Ungen'rous youth, thy boast how poor,
To steal a heart, and break it too!

No cold approach, no alter'd mien,
Just what would make suspicion start;
No pause the dire extremes between,
He made me blest—and broke my heart!
Hope from its only anchor torn,
Neglected and neglecting all,
Friendless, forsaken, and forlorn,
The tears I shed must ever fall.]

Dainty Davie.

THIS song, tradition says, and the composition itself confirms it, was composed on the Rev. David Williamson's begetting the daughter of Lady Cherrytrees with child, while a party of dragoons were searching her house to apprehend him for being an adherent to the solemn league and covenant. The pious woman had put a lady's night-cap on him, and had laid him a-bed with her own daughter, and passed him to the soldiery as a lady, her daughter's bedfellow. A mutilated stanza or two are to be found in Herd's collection, but the original song consists of five or six stanzas, and were their *delicacy* equal to their *wit* and *humour*, they would merit a place in any collection. The first stanza is as follows:

Being pursued by the dragoons,
Within my bed he was laid down;
And weel I wat he was worth his room,
For he was my daintie Davie.

Ramsay's song, "Luckie Nansy," though he calls it an old song with additions, seems to be all his own, except the chorus:

I was a telling you,
Luckie Nansy, luckie Nansy,
Auld springs wad ding the new,
But ye wad never trow me.

Which I should conjecture to be part of a song, prior to the affair of Williamson.

["Luckie Nansy" is one of the very happiest of all Allan Ramsay's songs:—

While fops in soft Italian verse,
Ilk fair ane's een and breast rehearse,
While sangs abound and scene is scarce,
These lines I have indited:
But neither darts nor arrows here,
Venus nor Cupid shall appear,
And yet with these fine sounds I swear,
The maidens are delighted.

I was ay telling you,
Lucky Nansy, lucky Nansy,
Auld springs wad ding the new,
But ye wad never trow me.

Nor snaw with crimson will I mix,
To spread upon my lassie's cheeks;
And syne th' unmeaning name prefix,
Miranda, Chloe, Phillis.
I'll fetch nae simile frae Jove,
My height of extacy to prove,
Nor sighing,—thus—present my love
With roses eke and lilies.

I was ay telling you, &c.

But stay—I had amaist forgot
My mistress and my sang to boot,
And that's an unco' faut, I wot:
But Nansy, 'tis nae matter.
Ye see I clink my verse wi' rhyme,
And, ken ye, that atones the crime;
Forbye, how sweet my numbers chime,
And slide away like water!

I was ay telling you, &c.

Now ken, my reverend sonsy fair,
Thy runkled cheeks and lyart hair,
Thy haff shut een and hodling air,
Are a' my passion's fuel.
Nae skyring gowk, my dear, can see,
Or love, or grace, or heaven in thee;
Yet thou hast charms enow for me,
Then smile, and be na cruel.

Leeze me on thy snawy pow,
Lucky Nansy, lucky Nansy,
Dryest wood will eithest low,
And Nansy, sae will ye now.

Troth I have sung the sang to you,
Which ne'er anither bard wad do;
Hear then my charitable vow,
Dear venerable Nansy,
But if the warld my passion wrang,
And say, ye only live in sang,
Ken, I despise a sland'ring tongue,
And sing to please my fancy.

Leeze me on thy, &c.

Tytler, on very doubtful authority, says that Duncan Forbes, of Culloden, was the author of this song.]

Bob o' Dumblane.

Ramsay, as usual, has modernized this song. The original, which I learned on the spot, from my old hostess in the principal inn there, is:—

Lassie, lend me your braw hemp heckle,
And I'll lend you my thripplin-kame;
My heckle is broken, it canna be gotten,
And we'll gae dance the bob o' Dumblane.

Twa gaed to the wood, to the wood, to the wood,
Twa gaed to the wood—three came hame:
An' it be na weel bobbit, weel bobbit, weel bobbit,
An' it be na weel bobbit, we'll bob it again.

I insert this song to introduce the following anecdote, which I have heard well authenticated. In the evening of the day of the battle of Dumblane (Sherriff-Muir) when the action was over, a Scots officer, in Argyle's army, observed to his Grace that he was afraid the rebels would give out to the world that *they* had gotten the victory.—"Weel, weel," returned his Grace, alluding to the foregoing ballad, "if they think it be na weel bobbit, we'll bob it again."

[The battle of Dumblane, or Sherriff-Muir, was fought on the 13th of November, 1715, between the Earl of Mar, for the Chevalier, and the Duke of Argyle, for the government.—Both sides claimed the victory, the left wing of either army being routed. Ritson observes, it is very remarkable that the capture of Preston happened on the same day.]

THE AYR-SHIRE BALLADS.

That Burns was a great admirer of the ancient minstrelsy of the West of Scotland, his numerous notes on Scottish song sufficiently attest. He was well acquainted with ballad lore, and communicated several interesting specimens to Johnson's Musical Museum: of these "Hughie Graeme," "The Gude Wallace," and the "Lochmaben Harper," are the best: his attention being afterwards drawn to the subject by William Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee, he recollected several snatches of old ballads, wrote them down, and sent them to his friend with the following letter:

Sir,—Inclosed I have sent you a sample of the old pieces that are still to be found among our peasantry in the west.—I once had a great many of these fragments, and some of these here entire; but as I had no idea then that any body cared for them, I have forgotten them. I invariably hold it sacrilege to add any thing of my own to help out with the shattered wrecks of these venerable old compositions; but they have many various readings. If you have not seen these before, I know they will flatter your true old-style Caledonian feelings; at any rate, I am truly happy to have an opportunity of assuring you how sincerely I am, Revered Sir, your grateful and obliged humble Servant,

Robert Burns.

Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, August, 1790.

Many compositions of this description he rescued from oblivion, and sent them to the "Scots Musical Museum," and it appears to have been his design to recover all which were worthy of preservation. Several of them underwent his correction and emendation, as the subjoined unpublished extract from one of his letters will testify:—

"The songs marked Z in the 'Museum,' I have given to the world as old verses of their respective tunes; but, in fact, of a good many of them little more than the chorus is ancient, though there is no reason for telling every body this piece of intelligence."

The first of these Ballads is a western version of

The Dowie Dens of Yarrow.

Tune—*Willie's Rare.*

Nae birdies sang the mirky hour
Amang the braes o' Yarrow,
But slumber'd on the dewy boughs
To wait the waukening morrow.

Where shall I gang, my ain true love,
Where shall I gang to hide me;
For weel ye ken, i' yere father's bow'r,
It wad be death to find me.

O go ye to yon tavern house,
An' there count owre your lawin,
An' if I be a woman true,
I'll meet you in the dawin'.

O he's gone to yon tavern house,
An' ay he counted his lawin,
An' ay he drank to her guid health
Was to meet him in the dawin'.

O he's gone to yon tavern house,
An' counted owre his lawin,
When in there cam' three armed men,
To meet him in the dawin'.

O, woe be unto woman's wit,
It has beguiled many!
She promised to come hersel'
But she sent three men to slay me!

* * * *

Get up, get up, now, sister Ann,
I fear we've wrought you sorrow;
Get up, ye'll find your true love slain,
Among the banks of Yarrow.

She sought him east, she sought him west,
She sought him braid and narrow,
'Till in the clintin of a craig
She found him drown'd in Yarrow.

She's ta'en three links of her yellow hair,
That hung down lang and yellow,
And she's tied it about sweet Willie's waist,
An' drawn him out of Yarrow.

* * * *

I made my love a suit of clothes,
I clad him all in tartan,
But ere the morning sun arose
He was a' bluid to the gartan.

* * * *

Cetera desunt.

[Hamilton, of Bangour, must have been acquainted with this western version of the "Dowie dens of Yarrow" when he wrote his very affecting ballad: it seems also to have been known

to Logan: it appears however to have escaped the researches of that most vigilant and poetic of all antiquaries, Sir Walter Scott, whose version in the Border Minstrelsy has little in common with the fragment which the Bard of Ayr preserved. It would seem that Scott had failed in obtaining the entire ballad: his copy begins obscurely as well as abruptly.

Late at e'en drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing;
They set a combat 'tween them twa,
To fight it in the dawing.

O stay at hame, my noble lord,
O stay at hame, my marrow;
My cruel brother will you betray,
On the dowie houms o' Yarrow.

Two tall grey stones stand about eighty paces distant from each other, to mark out the spot where this contest took place in which both perished: but whether they are to be considered as a memorial of the "Willie" of the present ballad is uncertain.]

Rob Roy.

Tune—*A rude set of the Mill, Mill, O!*

Rob Roy from the Highlands came
Unto the Lawlan' border,
To steal awa a gay ladie,
To haud his house in order:
He cam owre the loch o' Lynn,
Twenty men his arms did carry;
Himsel gaed in an' fand her out,
Protesting he would marry.

O will ye gae wi' me, he says,
Or will ye be my honey;
Or will ye be my wedded wife,
For I love you best of ony:
I winna gae wi' you, she says,
Nor will I be your honey;
Nor will I be your wedded wife,
You love me for my money.

* * * *

But he set her on a coal black steed,
Himsel lap on behind her;
An' he's awa to the highland hills,
Whare her frien's they canna find her.

[The song went on to narrate the forcing her to bed; when the tune changes to something like "Jenny dang the weaver."]

* * * *

Rob Roy was my father ca'd,
Macgregor was his name, ladie;
He led a band o' heroes bauld,
An' I am here the same, ladie.
Be content, be content,
Be content to stay, ladie;
For thou art my wedded wife
Until thy dying day, ladie.

He was a hedge unto his frien's,
A heckle to his foes, ladie;
Every one that durst him wrang,
He took him by the nose, ladie.
I'm as bold, I'm as bold,
I'm as bold, an' more, ladie;
He that daurs dispute my word
Shall feel my guid claymore, ladie.

["The history of Rob Roy the reader may find at great length in Maclaurin's Criminal Trials. He was the son of the Rob Roy Macgregor who figures in the Rebellion, 1715. The short account of him is this. He was outlawed by sentence of the Court of Justiciary in Scotland, in 1736, for not appearing to stand trial for the murder of a man of the name of Maclaren. In this state of outlawry, he formed the mad and desperate project of carrying off and forcibly accomplishing a marriage with Jane Key, heiress of Edinbelly, and thus getting possession of her estate. He and his brother James Macgregor, at the head of a band of armed ruffians, entered her mother's house, dragged her out, and tying her, hand and foot, with ropes, laid her across a horse, and brought her in this situation to the house of one of their clan, in a wild and sequestered part of the mountains of Argyle-shire; where, after some show of a marriage ceremony, she was put to bed, and forcibly compelled to submit to his embraces.

On a discovery of the place of her concealment she was rescued by her relations, and Rob Roy, and his brother James, were tried capitally for the crime. James made his escape from prison before sentence, was outlawed in consequence, and some years afterwards obtained a pardon. Rob Roy was condemned and executed, February, 1753."—Cromek.]

Young Hyndhorn.

To its own Tune.

Near Edinburgh was a young son born,
Hey lilelu an' a how low lan',
An' his name it was called young Hyndhorn,
An' its hey down down deedle airo.

Seven long years he served the king,
An' it's a' for the sake of his daughter Jean.

The king an angry man was he,
He sent young Hyndhorn to the sea.

* * *

An' on his finger she put a ring.

* * *

When your ring turns pale an' wan,
Then I'm in love wi' another man.

* * *

Upon a day he look'd at his ring,
It was as pale as any thing.

He's left the sea, an' he's come to the lan',
An' there he met an auld beggar man.

What news, what news, my auld beggar man,
What news, what news by sea or by lan'.

Nae news, nae news, the auld beggar said,
But the king's dochter Jean is going to be wed.

Cast aff, cast aff thy auld beggar-weed,
An' I'll gie thee my gude grey steed.

* * *

When he cam to our guid king's yett, [sake,
He sought a glass o' wine for young Hyndhorn's

He drank out the wine an' he put in the ring,
An' he bade them carry't to the king's dochter Jean.

* * *

O gat ye't by sea, or gat ye't by lan',
Or gat ye't aff a dead man's han'?

I gat na't by sea, I gat na't by lan',
But I gat it out of your own han'.

* * *

Go take away my bridal gown,
An' I'll follow him frae town to town.

Ye need na leave your bridal gown,
For I'll make ye ladie o' mony a town.*

---

* [The story of Hynd Horn seems to have been popular with our ancient metre ballad-mongers, for it may be traced in several of the olden strains which delighted our forefathers.

Mr. Cromek seems not to have been aware of the jewel he had picked up, as it is passed over without a single remark. We have been fortunate enough to recover two copies from recitation, which, joined to the stanzas preserved by Mr. Cromek, have enabled us to present it to the public in its present complete state. Though Hynd Horn possesses no claims upon the reader's attention on account of its poetry, yet it is highly valuable as illustrative of the history of romantic ballad. In fact, it is nothing else than a portion of the ancient English metrical romance of "Kyng Horn," which some benevolent pen, peradventure, "for luf of the lewed man," hath stripped of its "quainte Inglis," and given—

"In symple speche as he couthe,
That is lightest in maune's mouthe."

Of this the reader will be at once convinced, if he compares it with the romance alluded to, or rather with the fragment of the one preserved in the Auchinleck MS., entitled, "Horne Childe and Maiden Riminild," both of which ancient poems are to be found in Ritson's Metrical Romances.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to remind the reader, that Hend or Hynd means 'courteous, kind, affable,' &c., epithets, which, we doubt not, the hero of the ballad was fully entitled to assume.—MOTHERWELL.

NEAR Edinburgh was a young child born,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And his name it was called young Hynd Horn,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

Seven long years he served the king,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And it's a' for the sake of his dochter Jean,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The king an angry man was he,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
He sent young Hynd Horn to the sea,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Oh! I never saw my love before,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
Till I saw her thro' an augre bore,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"And she gave to me a gay gold ring,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
With three shining diamonds set therein,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"And I gave to her a silver wand,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
With three singing lavrocks set thereon,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"What if those diamonds lose their hue?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
Just when my love begins for to rue,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"For when your ring turns pale and wan,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
Then I'm in love with another man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

He's left the land, and he's gone to the sea,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And he's stay'd there seven years and a day,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

Seven lang years he has been on the sea,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And Hynd Horn has look'd how his ring may be,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

But when he looked this ring upon,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
The shining diamonds were both pale and wan,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

Oh! the ring it was both black and blue,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And she's either dead, or she's married,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

He's left the seas, and he's come to the land,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And the first he met was an auld beggar man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"What news? what news? my silly auld man?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
For it's seven years since I have seen land,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"What news? what news? thou auld beggar man;
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
What news? what news? by sea or land?
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"No news at all," said the auld beggar man,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
"But there is a wedding in the king's hall,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"There is a king's dochter in the west,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And she has been married thir nine nights past,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Into the bride-bed she winna gang,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
Till she hears tell of her ain Hynd Horn,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"Wilt thou give to me thy begging coat,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And I'll give to thee my scarlet cloak,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Wilt thou give to me thy begging staff,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And I'll give to thee my good grey steed,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

The auld beggar man cast off his coat,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And he's ta'en up the scarlet cloak,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The auld beggar man threw down his staff,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And he is mounted the good grey steed,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The auld beggar man was bound for the mill,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But young Hynd Horn for the king's hall,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

The auld beggar man was bound for to ride,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But young Hynd Horn was bound for the bride,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

When he came to the king's gate,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
He asked a drink for young Hynd Horn's sake,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

These news unto the bonnie bride came,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
That at the yett there stands an auld man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

There stands an auld man at the king's gate,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
He asketh a drink for young Hynd Horn's sake,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"I'll go through nine fires so hot,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But I'll give him a drink, for young Hynd Horn's sake,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

She went to the gate where the auld man did stand,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And she gave him a drink out of her own hand,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

She gave him a cup out of her own hand,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
He drunk out the drink, and dropt in the ring,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Got thou it by sea, or got thou it by land?
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
Or got thou it off a dead man's hand?
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"I got it not by sea, but I got it by land,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
For I got it out of thine own hand,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"I'll cast off my gowns of brown,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And I'll follow thee from town to town,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"I'll cast off my gowns of red,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
And along with thee I'll beg my bread,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

"Thou need not cast off thy gowns of brown,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
For I can make thee lady of many a town,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Thou need not cast off thy gowns of red,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
For I can maintain thee with both wine and bread,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie."

The bridegroom thought he had the bonnie bride wed,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
But young Hynd Horn took the bride to the bed,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

[The letters of Burns extend over a large portion of his life: they are varied, vigorous, and characteristic. They are addressed to persons of almost all conditions: a few are to humble farmers and little lairds: some to village shop-keepers and parish school-masters: a number are to clergymen: many to noblemen and ladies of beauty and rank, while a great variety are written to men of high literary eminence, such as Tytler, Blair, Stewart, Alison, and Moore. They contain much of the personal history of the Poet: exhibit numerous sketches of character, pictures of manners, and views of domestic life; with many of those vivid touches and original sallies which communicate to prose the feeling and sentiment of poetry. Almost all the letters which Burns wrote will be found in this edition of his works: from that first humble one which he addressed to his father, on the darkness of his future prospects, till that last and most mournful one written to James Armour, at Mauchline, begging his mother-in-law to hasten to Dumfries, for that his wife was about to be confined, and he was himself dying.

"The letters of Burns," says Sir Walter Scott, "although containing passages of great eloquence, bear, occasionally, strong marks of affectation, with a tincture of pedantry, rather foreign to the Bard's character and education. They are written in various tones of feeling, and modes of mind: in some instances exhibiting all the force of the writer's talents, in others only valuable because they bear his signature."* Another critical judge has delivered a much sterner opinion.—"The prose works of Burns," says Jeffrey, "consist almost entirely of his letters. They bear, as well as his poetry, the seal and impress of his genius: but they contain much more bad taste, and are written with far more apparent labour. His poetry was almost all written primarily from feeling, and only secondarily from ambition. His letters seem to have been nearly all composed as exercises, and for display. There are few of them written with simplicity or plainness: and, though natural enough as to the sentiment, they are, generally, very strained and elaborate in the expression. A very great proportion of them, too, relate neither to facts nor feelings peculiarly connected with the author or his correspondent, but are made up of general declamation, moral reflections, and vague discussions—all evidently composed for the sake of effect."

"In the critic's almost wholesale condemnation of the prose of Burns," says Cunningham, "the world has not concurred: he sins, somewhat indeed, in the spirit of Jeffrey's description, but his errors are neither so serious nor so frequent as has been averred. In truth, his prose partakes largely of the character of his poetry: there is the same earnest vehemence of language: the same happy quickness of perception: the same mixture of the solemn with the sarcastic, and the humourous with the tender; and the presence everywhere of that ardent and penetrating spirit which sheds light and communicates importance to all it touches. He is occasionally turgid, it is true; neither is he so simple and unaffected in prose as he is in verse: but this is more the fault of his education than of his taste. His daily language was the dialect of his native land; and in that he expressed himself with almost miraculous clearness and precision: the language of his verse corresponds with that of his conversation: but the etiquette of his day required his letters to be in English; and in that, to him, almost foreign tongue, he now and then moved with little ease or grace. Yet though a peasant, and labouring to express himself in a language alien to his lips, his letters yield not in interest to those of the ripest scholars of the age. He wants the colloquial ease of Cowper, but he is less minute and tedious: he lacks the withering irony of Byron, but he has more humour, and infinitely less of that 'pribble prabble' which deforms the noble lord's correspondence and memoranda.

"Wilson has, perhaps, expressed the truest opinion of all our critics concerning the letters of Burns, though he certainly errs when he

* [And are they not valuable inasmuch as they do bear that signature? The devotion with which the memory of Burns is cherished by his countrymen has rendered the meanest trifle which he penned inestimable in their eyes, and the same may be said with regard to the lightest and most careless effusions of the gifted spirit whom we have quoted, now since he has been called to mingle with ancestral dust within the hallowed precincts of Dryburgh abbey.—Motherwell.]

says that the Poet wrote many of them when tipsy—nay, intoxicated. He belonged, indeed, to days of hard drinking: Pitt sometimes reeled when he rose to discourse on the state of the nation: Fox, it is averred, loved the bottle,—though he contrived to stand steady; and Sheridan, it is well known, perfumed his eloquence with wine. There is something like intoxication of feeling and sentiment in the letters of Burns; but in the wildest of them sense and genius predominate."

"The letters of Burns," observes Wilson, "are said to be too elaborate, the expression more studied and artificial than belongs to that species of composition. Now the truth is, Burns never considered letter writing 'a species of composition' subject to certain rules of taste and criticism. That had never occurred to him, and so much the better. But hundreds, even of his most familiar letters, are perfectly artless, though still most eloquent, compositions. Simple we may not call them, so rich are they in fancy, so overflowing in feeling, and dashed off every other paragraph with the easy boldness of a great master, conscious of his strength, even at times when, of all things in the world, he was least solicitous about display: while some there are so solemn, so sacred, so religious, that he who can read them with an unstirred heart can have no trust, no hope, in the immortality of the soul." To this eloquent commendation the heart of Scotland responds.

Of his correspondence, Mr. Lockhart thus speaks with all the generous feeling of a congenial and sympathising mind:—

"From the time that Burns settled himself in Dumfries-shire, he appears to have conducted with much care the extensive correspondence in which his celebrity had engaged him; it is, however, very necessary in judging of these letters, and drawing inferences from their language as to the real sentiments and opinions of the writer, to take into consideration the rank and character of the persons to whom they were severally addressed, and the measure of intimacy which really subsisted between them and the Poet. In his letters, as in his conversation, Burns, in spite of all his pride, did something to accommodate himself to his company: and he who did write the series of letters addressed to Mrs. Dunlop, Dr. Moore, Mr. Dugald Stewart, Miss Chalmers, and others, eminently distinguished as these are by purity, and nobleness of feeling, and perfect propriety of language, presents himself, in other effusions of the same class, in colours which it would be rash to call his own. That he should have condescended to any such compliance must be regretted; but, in most cases, it would probably be quite unjust to push our censure further than this."

The critique upon his prose writings by Professor Walker, which we subjoin, is equally worthy of perusal:—

"The prose writings of Burns consist almost solely of his correspondence, and are therefore to be considered as presenting no sufficient criterion of his powers. Epistolary effusions, being a sort of written conversation, participate in many of the advantages and defects of discourse. They materially vary, both in subject and manner, with the character of the person addressed, to which the mind of their author for the moment assumes an affinity. To equals they are familiar and negligent, and to superiors they can scarcely avoid that transition, to careful effort and studied correctness, which the behaviour of the writer would undergo, when entering the presence of those to whom his talents were his only introduction. Burns, from the lowness of his origin, found himself inferior in rank to all his correspondents, except his father and brother; and, although the superiority of his genius should have done more than correct this disparity of condition, yet between pretensions so incommensurable it is difficult to produce a perfect equality. Burns evidently labours to reason himself into a feeling of its completeness, but the very frequency of his efforts betrays his dissatisfaction with their success, and he may therefore be considered as writing under the influence of a desire to create or to preserve the admiration of his correspondents. In this object he must certainly have succeeded; for, if his letters are deficient in some of the charms of epistolary writing, the deficiency is supplied by others. If they occasionally fail in colloquial ease and simplicity, they abound in genius, in richness of sentiment, and strength of expression. The taste of Burns, according to the judgment of Professor Stewart, was not sufficiently correct and refined to relish chaste and artless prose, but was captivated by writers who labour their periods into a pointed and antithetical brilliancy. What he preferred he would naturally be ambitious to imitate; and though he might have chosen better models, yet those which were his choice he has imitated with success. Even in poetry, if we may judge from his few attempts in English heroic measure, he was as far from attaining, and perhaps from desiring to attain, the flowing sweetness of Goldsmith, as he is in his letters from aiming at the graceful ease of Addison, or the severe simplicity of Swift. Burns in his prose seems never to have forgot that he was a poet; but, though his style may be taxed with occasional luxuriance, and with the admission of crowded and even of compounded epithets, few will deny that genius is displayed in their invention and application, as few will deny that there is eloquence in the harangue of an Indian Sachem, although it be not in the shape to which we are accustomed, nor pruned of its flowers by the critical exactness of a British orator.

"It is to be observed, however, that Burns

could diversify his style with great address to suit the taste of his various correspondents: and that when he occasionally swells it into declamation, or stiffens it into pedantry, it is for the amusement of an individual whom he knew it would amuse, and should not be mistaken for the style which he thought most proper for the public. The letter to his father, for whom he had a deep veneration, and of whose applause he was no doubt desirous, is written with care, but with no exuberance. It is grave, pious, and gloomy, like the mind of the person who was to receive it. In his correspondence with Dr. Blair, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Erskine, his style has a respectful propriety and a regulated vigour which shew a just conception of what became himself, and suited his relation with the persons whom he addressed. He writes to Mr. Nicol in a vein of strong and ironical extravagance, which was congenial to the manner, and adapted to the taste, of his friend. To his female correspondents, without excepting the venerable Mrs. Dunlop, he is lively, and sometimes romantic; and a skilful critic may perceive his pen under the influence of that tenderness for the feminine character which has been already noticed. In short, through the whole collection, we see various shades of gravity and care, or of sportive pomp and intentional affectation, according to the familiarity which subsisted between the writer and the person for whose exclusive perusal he wrote: and before we estimate the merit of any single letter, we should know the character of both correspondents, and the measure of their intimacy. These remarks are suggested by the objections of a distinguished critic, to a letter which was communicated to Mr. Cromek, without its address, by the author of this critique, and which occurs in the 'Reliques of Burns.' The censure would perhaps have been softened, had the critic been aware that the timidity which he blames was no serious attempt at fine writing, but merely a playful effusion in mock-heroic, to divert a friend whom he had formerly succeeded in diverting with similar sallies. Burns was sometimes happy in short complimentary addresses, of which a specimen is subjoined. It is inscribed on the blank-leaf of a book presented to Mrs. Graham of Fintray, from which it was copied, by that lady's permission:—

TO MRS. GRAHAM OF FINTRAY.

'It is probable, Madam, that this page may be read when the hand that now writes it shall be mouldering in the dust: may it then bear witness that I present you these volumes as a tribute of gratitude, on my part ardent and sincere, as your and Mr. Graham's goodness to me has been generous and noble! May every child of yours, in the hour of need, find such a friend as I shall teach every child of mine that their father found in you.

ROBERT BURNS.'

"The letters of Burns may on the whole be regarded as a valuable offering to the public. They are curious, as evidences of his genius, and interesting, as keys to his character; and they can scarcely fail to command the admiration of all who do not measure their pretensions by an unfair standard."

"Of the following letters," says Currie, "a considerable number were transmitted for publication by the individuals to whom they were addressed, but very few have been printed entire. It will easily be believed that in a series of letters written without the least view to publication, various passages were found unfit for the press, from different considerations. It will also be readily supposed that our Poet, writing nearly at the same time, and under the same feelings to different individuals, would sometimes fall into the same train of sentiment and forms of expression. To avoid, therefore, the tediousness of such repetitions, it has been found necessary to mutilate many of the individual letters, and sometimes to exscind parts of great delicacy—the unbridled effusions of panegyric and regard. But though many of the letters are printed from originals furnished by the persons to whom they were addressed, others are printed from first draughts, or sketches, found among the papers of our Bard. Though, in general, no man committed his thoughts to his correspondents with less consideration or effort than Burns, yet it appears that in some instances he was dissatisfied with his first essays, and wrote out his communications in a fairer character, or perhaps in more studied language. In the chaos of the manuscripts, some of the original sketches were found: and as these sketches, though less perfect, are fairly to be considered as the offspring of his mind, where they have seemed in themselves worthy of a place in this volume, we have not hesitated to insert them, though they may not always correspond exactly with the letters transmitted, which have been lost or withheld."

Time, since the days of Currie, has removed many of the obstacles which influenced him in suppressing portions of these inimitable letters. Those passages omitted from personal considerations are now restored. A number of highly interesting original letters are in this edition, for the first time, given to the world, and it is believed the correspondence of the illustrious Bard is now presented in a more complete form than it has ever yet appeared.]

No. I.

TO WILLIAM BURNESS.

Irvine, Dec. 27th, 1781.

HONOURED SIR:

I HAVE purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-Year's day; but work comes so hard upon us that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame.—Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are alightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable, employment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way; I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and, if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

> "The soul, uneasy, and confin'd at home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me, for all that this world has to offer.* As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and with wishing you a merry New-year's day, I shall conclude. I am, honoured sir, your dutiful son,

ROBERT BURNESS.†

P.S. My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more.‡

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* [The verses of Scripture here alluded to are as follows:—

REV. vii. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.]

† [When Burns wrote this touching letter to his father, he was toiling as a heckler in his unfortunate flax speculation, a dull as well as a dusty employment. On the fourth day after it was penned, the Poet and his relation Peacock were welcoming in the new year; a lighted candle touched some flax, and there was an end to all their hopes.

Of William Burness, the father of the Poet, much has already been said: he was a worthy and pious man, desirous of maintaining right discipline in his house, and solicitous about the present and future welfare of his children. He was somewhat austere of manners; loved not boisterous jocularity; was rarely himself moved to laughter, and has been described as abstemious of speech. His early and continued misfortunes, though they saddened his brow, never affected the warm benevolence of his nature; he was liberal to the poor, and stern and self-denying only to himself. He is buried in Alloway kirk-yard, and his grave is visited by all who desire to pay homage to the fame of his eminent son.—CUNNINGHAM.]

‡ [It is no uncommon case for a small farmer, or even cotter, in Scotland, to have a son placed at some distant seminary of learning, or serving an apprenticeship to some metropolitan writer or tradesman; in which case, the youth is almost invariably supplied with oatmeal, the staple of the poor Scotsman's life—cheese, perhaps—oaten or barley bread, &c., from the home stores, by the intervention of the weekly or fortnightly carrier. There is an anecdote related of a gentleman, now high in consideration at the Scottish bar, whose father, a poor villager, in the upper ward of Lanark-shire, having contrived to get him placed at Glasgow university, supported him there chiefly by a weekly bag of oatmeal. On one occasion, the supply was stopped for nearly three weeks by a snow-storm. The young man's meal, like Burns's, was out; but his pride, or his having no intimate acquaintance, prevented him from borrowing. And this remarkable and powerful-minded man had all but perished before the dissolving snow allowed a new stock of provisions to reach him. —CHAMBERS.

"One of the most striking letters in the Collection," (Cromek's Reliques of Burns,) says Jeffrey, "and to us, one of the most interesting, is the earliest of the whole series; being addressed to his father in 1781, six or seven years before his name had been heard out of his own family. The author was then a common flax-dresser, and his father a poor peasant;—yet there is not one trait of vulgarity, either in thought or expression; but, on the contrary, a dignity and elevation of sentiment which must have been considered as of good omen in a youth of much higher condition."

"This letter," says Dr. Currie, "written several years before the publication of his poems, when his name was as obscure as his condition was humble, displays the philosophic melancholy which so generally forms the poetical temperament, and that buoyant and ambitious spirit, which indicates a mind cautious of its strength. At Irvine, Burns at this time possessed a single room for his lodgings, rented perhaps at the rate of a shilling a-week. He passed his days in constant labour, as a flax-dresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal, sent to him from his father's family. The store of this humble though wholesome nutriment, it appears, was nearly exhausted, and he was about to borrow till he should obtain a supply. Yet even in this situation his active imagination had formed to itself pictures of eminence and distinction. His despair of making a figure in the world shows how ardently he wished for honourable fame; and his contempt of life, founded on this despair, is the genuine expression of a youthful and generous mind. In such a state of reflection and of suffering, the imagination of Burns naturally passed the dark boundaries of our earthly horizon, and rested on those beautiful creations of a better world, where there is neither thirst, nor hunger, nor sorrow, and where happiness shall be in proportion to the capacity of happiness."]

No. II.

TO Mr. JOHN MURDOCH,

SCHOOL-MASTER,

STAPLES INN BUILDINGS, LONDON.

Lochlea, 15th January, 1783.

Dear Sir:

As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter without putting you to that expense which any production of mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship.

I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher: and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you would be pleased with;—but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have, indeed, kept pretty clear of vicious habits; and, in this respect, I hope, my conduct will not disgrace the education I have gotten; but as a man of the world, I am most miserably deficient. One would have thought that, bred as I have been, under a father who has figured pretty well as *un homme des affaires,* I might have been what the world calls a pushing, active fellow; but to tell you the truth, Sir, there is hardly any thing more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world, to see and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be any thing original about him, which shews me human nature in a different light from any thing I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways;" and for this darling subject, I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling, busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour, I am very easy with regard to any thing further. Even the last, worst shift of the unfortunate and the wretched * does not much terrify me: I know that even then my talent for what country folks call "a sensible crack," when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem that even then—I would learn to be happy. However, I am under no apprehensions about that; for though indolent, yet so far as an extremely delicate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not, indeed, for the sake of the money; but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach; and I scorn to fear the face of any man living: above every thing, I abhor as hell the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch, who in my heart I despise and detest. 'Tis this, and this alone, that endears economy to me. In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profuse.—My favorite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone, particularly his "Elegies;" Thomson; "Man of Feeling"—a book I prize next to the Bible; "Man of the World;" Sterne, especially his "Sentimental Journey;" Macpherson's "Ossian," &c.;—these are the glorious models after which I endeavour to form my conduct, and 'tis incongruous,—'tis absurd to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lighted up at their sacred flame—the man whose heart distends with benevolence to all the human race—he "who can soar above this little scene of things"—can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the terræ-filial race fret, and fume, and vex themselves! O how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor, insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them, reading a page or two of mankind, and "catching the manners living as they rise," whilst the men of business jostle me on every side, as an idle incumbrance in their way.—But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs. Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere common-place story; but my warmest, kindest wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself, from, dear Sir, yours,

R. B.†

* [The last shift alluded to here must be the condition of an itinerant beggar.—Currie.]

† ["As exhibiting the progress of the Poet's studies, as well as the names of his favourite authors, this letter, addressed to his old teacher at Lochlea, Mr. Murdoch, is very interesting, and affords us an insight into the origin of part of that sentimentalism and exaggeration of feeling which are occasionally perceptible, both in his prose and poetical works. After this confession, it is no marvel to us that the muse of Coila, when she presented herself to the imaginings of her only and choicest son, when sitting 'lanely by the ingle cheek,' had 'a hair-brained sentimental trace strongly marked in her face.' Burns, at this period, however, had a full consciousness of his own innate powers, and the pride of genius breaks out in almost every line. The glorious triumph does indeed swell the heart, and in his confidential letter to his early preceptor, he makes no attempts to conceal it."—Motherwell.

John Murdoch, as has already been intimated, kept the school of Lochlea, and instructed for a time the sons of William Burness. He was much of an enthusiast in his calling, and took delight in teaching such quick boys as the Poet and his brother; he was a frequent guest at the good man's fire-side, and spent the hours of evening in profitable conversation, on poetry, history, and religion. He removed to London, and maintained himself by his learning; nor was it without some surprise, it is said, that he first heard of his pupil's fame in poetry.—"Gilbert," observes this discerning teacher, "always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of a wit, than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church music; here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice untuneable; his countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, 'Mirth, with thee I mean to live:' and certainly, if

No. III.

TO Mr. JAMES BURNESS,

WRITER, MONTROSE.*

Lochlea, 21st June, 1783.

Dear Sir:

My father received your favour of the 10th current, and as he has been for some months very poorly in health, and is in his own opinion (and, indeed, in almost every body's else) in a dying condition, he has only, with great difficulty, written a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father's correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Caird, and to him I must refer you for the news of our family.

I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high; oatmeal, 17*d.* and 18*d.* per peck, and not to be got even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white peas from England and elsewhere, but that resource is likely to fail us, and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort, Heaven only knows. This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet-weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landholders, full of ideas of farming, gathered from the English and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what in the event we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well in-

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any person, who knew the two boys, had been asked which of them was most likely to court the muses, he would surely never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind."

Mr. John Murdoch died April 20, 1824, aged seventy-seven. He had published a Radical Vocabulary of the French language, 12mo. 1783; Pronunciation and Orthography of the French language, 8vo. 1788; Dictionary of Distinctions, 8vo. 1811; and other works. He was a highly amiable and worthy man. In his latter days, illness had reduced him to the brink of destitution, and an appeal was made to the friends and admirers of his illustrious pupil, in his behalf. Some money was thus raised, and applied to the relief of his necessities. It is stated, in the obituary notice of Mr. Murdoch, published in the London papers, that he had taught English in London to several distinguished foreigners; among the rest, to the celebrated Talleyrand, during his residence as an emigrant in England.]

The following is Mr. Murdoch's reply to the letter of Burns:—

London, October 20th, 1787.

My dear Sir,

As my friend Mr. Brown is going from this place to your neighbourhood, I embrace the opportunity of telling you that I am yet alive, tolerably well, and always in expectation of being better. By the much-valued letters before me, I see that it was my duty to have given this intelligence about three years and nine months ago; and have nothing to allege as an excuse but that we poor, busy, bustling bodies in London are so much taken up with the various pursuits in which we are here engaged that we seldom think of any person, creature, place, or thing, that is absent. But this is not altogether the case with me; for I often think of you, and *Hornie*, and *Russell*, and an *unfathomed depth*, and *lowan brunstane*, all in the same minute, although you and they are (as I suppose) at a considerable distance. I flatter myself, however, with the pleasing thought that you and I shall meet some time or other, either in Scotland or England. If ever you come hither, you will have the satisfaction of seeing your poems relished by the Caledonians in London, full as much they can be by those of Edinburgh. We frequently repeat some of your verses in our Caledonian Society; and you may believe that I am not a little vain that I have had some share in cultivating such a genius. I was not absolutely certain that you were the author, till a few days ago, when I made a visit to Mrs. Hill, Dr. McComb's eldest daughter, who lives in town, and who told me that she was informed of it by a letter from her sister in Edinburgh, with whom you had been in company when in that capital.

Pray let me know if you have any intention of visiting this huge, overgrown metropolis. It would afford matter for a large poem. Here you would have an opportunity of indulging your views in the study of mankind, perhaps to a greater degree than in any city upon the face of the globe; for the inhabitants of London, as you know, are a collection of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, who make it, as it were, the centre of their commerce.

* * * * *

Present my respectful compliments to Mrs. Burness, to my dear friend Gilbert, and all the rest of her amiable children. May the Father of the Universe bless you all with those principles and dispositions that the best of parents took such uncommon pains to instil into your minds, from your earliest infancy. May you live as he did; if you do, you can never be unhappy. I feel myself grown serious all at once, and affected in a manner I cannot describe. I shall only add that it is one of the greatest pleasures I promise myself before I die, that of seeing the family of a man whose memory I revere more than that of any person that ever I was acquainted with. I am, my dear Friend,

Yours sincerely,

John Murdoch.

* [This gentleman (the son of an elder brother of my father), when he was very young, lost his parent, and having discovered in his repositories some of my father's letters, he requested that the correspondence might be renewed. My father continued till the last year of his life to correspond with his nephew, and it was afterwards kept up by my brother. Extracts from some of my brother's letters to his cousin are introduced in this edition for the purpose of exhibiting the Poet before he had attracted the notice of the public, and in his domestic family relations afterwards. —Gilbert Burns.

He was grandfather of Lieutenant Burnes, author of Travels in Bokhara, published a few years' since.

James Burness, son of the Poet's uncle, lives at Montrose, and has seen fame come to his house in a two-fold way; *viz.* through his eminent cousin Robert, and, dearer still, through his own grandson, Lieutenant Burnes, with whose talents and intrepidity the world is well acquainted. He is now, as may be surmised, descending into the vale of years: his faculties are still unimpaired, and his love of his own ancient name nothing lessened. He adheres—and we honour him for it—to the spelling of his ancestors; and is not at all pleased at the change made in the name; and even sighs, it is said, because his grandsons have adopted, in part, the Poet's modification.—Cunningham.]

formed in new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires, are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron, and Co.'s bank, which no doubt you heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and fopperies, has ruined as many more. There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at the last; and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

My mother sends you a small present of a cheese; 'tis but a very little one, as our last year's stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs. Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your country, when opportunity serves.

My father sends you, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness; and my mother and the rest of the family desire to inclose their kind compliments to you, Mrs. Burness, and the rest of your family, along with those of,

Dear Sir,
Your affectionate Cousin, R. B.

No. IV.

TO MISS ELIZA B***.*

Lochlea, 1783.

I VERILY believe, my dear Eliza, that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. This I hope will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean their being written in such a hasty manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for some zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister. I don't know how it is, my dear, for though, except your company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my Eliza warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathize with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the Divine Disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends to bestow on me in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that he may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add worthy of a Christian. The sordid earth-worm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst in reality his affection is centered in her pocket; and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market to choose one who is stout and firm, and, as we may say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty, puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex which was designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils! I don't envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner.

R. B.

* [This, and the three succeeding letters, were included in the first edition of the posthumous works of the Poet, but, for reasons which may be easily imagined, they were omitted in the following editions by Currie, nor were they restored by Gilbert Burns when his brother's works fell under his care. The name of the lady to whom they were addressed has not transpired: she was the heroine of several songs—of "Montgomery's Peggy," of "Bonnie Peggy Alison," and of that still finer lyric commencing,

'Now westlin' winds and slaught'ring guns.'

She was educated, the Bard himself tells us, more than what was then common among young women of her station; she was also distinguished for good sense as well as good looks. In the note on "Montgomery's Peggy," the Poet's account of his wooing and its indifferent success is given:—he desired to show his talents in letter-writing as well as display his conversational eloquence in twilight walks and stolen interviews. Currie gives these epistles to the twentieth year of Burns, and Lockhart inclines to the same period: but they seem to have been written during the year 1783: they are worthy of him in his best days: they are full of good sense and good feeling; and no doubt, "my dear Eliza" marvelled to find the impassioned lover of "The cannie hour at e'en" so reasonable and sedate on paper.—*Ibid.*

No. V.

TO THE SAME.

Lochlea, 1783.

My dear Eliza:

I do not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love, amongst people in our station in life; I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet, as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance, more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves: some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greater part of us; and I must own, my dear Eliza, it is a hard game such a one as you have to play when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere, and yet though you use him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months, or at farthest in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear Eliza, you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the marriage state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please, and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am the nobler faculties of the mind with kindred feelings of the heart can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree. If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it should please Providence to spare us to the latest period of life, I can look forward and see that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age; even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to me, I will regard my Eliza with the tenderest affection, and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of these noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

> "O! happy state when souls each other draw,
> When love is liberty, and nature law."

I know were I to speak in such a style to many a girl, who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous; but the language of the heart is, my dear Eliza, the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship, but I shall make no apology —I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.

R. B.

No. VI.

TO THE SAME.

Lochlea, 1783.

I have often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though in every other situation in life telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest, way of proceeding, a lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, than when his passion is sincere, and his intentions are honourable. I do not think that it is so difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness, which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity, which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct: but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth, and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment and purity of manners—to such a one, in such circumstances, I can assure you, my dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears, and distrustful anxieties crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with

"Burns, in these letters, moralizes occasionally very happily on love and marriage. They are, in fact, the only sensible love-letters we have ever seen." —Motherwell.

"It is probable," says Chambers, "that 'my dear Eliza was the heroine of the Poet's song, 'From thee, Eliza, I must go.' "—See page 353.]

vou, and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood that I am surprised they can be acted by any one in so noble, so generous a passion, as virtuous love. No, my dear Eliza, I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life, there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and, I will add, of a Christian. There is one thing, my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this; that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further that, if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of honour and virtue, if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness; if these are qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband, I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover, R. B.

No. VII.

TO THE SAME.

Lochlea, 1783.

I OUGHT, in good manners, to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked at the contents of it that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory; "you were sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me," what, without you I never can obtain, "you wish me all kind of happiness." It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am that sharing life with you would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I can never taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and your superior good sense, do not so much strike me; these, possibly, may be met with in a few instances in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition, with all the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with, in such a degree, in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much bevond anything I have ever met in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination has fondly flattered myself with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a hope, that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress; still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you, and, as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will soon leave this place, I wish to see or hear from you soon; and if an expression should perhaps escape me, rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it in, my dear Miss—(pardon me the dear expression for once) * * * *.

R. B.

No. VIII.

TO MR. JAMES BURNESS,

MONTROSE.

Lochlea, 17th Feb. 1784.

DEAR COUSIN:

I WOULD have returned you my thanks for your kind favour of the 13th of December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event, which, for some time past, we have from day to day expected.

On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers. Though, to be sure, we have had long warning of the impending stroke; still the feelings of nature claim their part, and I cannot recollect the tender endearments and parental lessons of the best of friends and ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn.

I hope my father's friends in your country will not let their connexion in this place die with him. For my part I shall ever with pleasure—with pride, acknowledge my connexion with those who were allied by the ties of blood and friendship to a man whose memory I shall ever honour and revere.

I expect, therefore, my dear Sir, you will not neglect any opportunity of letting me hear from you, which will very much oblige,

My dear Cousin, yours sincerely,

R. B.

No. IX.

TO JAMES BURNESS,

MONTROSE.

Mossgiel, August, 1784.

WE have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world

which, I dare say, has happened in the course of this half century. We have had a party of Presbytery relief, as they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the burgh of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago, a Mrs. Buchan from Glasgow came among them, and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and, in a short time, made many converts; and, among others, their preacher, Mr. Whyte, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he, and their spiritual mother, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, several of whom were in good circumstances; till, in spring last, the populace rose and mobbed Mrs. Buchan, and put her out of the town; on which, all her followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation that many of them never shut their doors behind them: one left a washing on the green, another a cow bellowing at the crib without food, or any body to mind her, and after several stages, they are fixed at present in the neighbourhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent; they have likewise disposed of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lodge and lie all together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and I can assure you the above mentioned are facts.

This, my dear Sir, is one of the many instances of the folly of leaving the guidance of sound reason and common sense in matters of religion. Whenever we neglect or despise these sacred monitors, the whimsical notions of a perturbated brain are taken for the immediate influences of the Deity, and the wildest fanaticism, and the most inconstant absurdities, will meet with abettors and converts. Nay, I have often thought that the more out-of-the-way and ridiculous the fancies are, if once they are sanctified under the sacred name of religion, the unhappy mistaken votaries are the more firmly glued to them.* R. B.

No. X.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND,†

EDINBURGH.

Mossgiel, Feb. 17, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR:

I HAVE not time at present to upbraid you for your silence and neglect; I shall only say I received yours with great pleasure. I have enclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your perusal. I have been very busy with the muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, "The Ordination," a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock: "Scotch drink," a poem; "The Cotter's Saturday Night;" "An Address to the De'il," &c. I have likewise completed my poem on the "Twa Dogs," but have not shewn it to the world. My chief patron now is Mr. Aiken in Ayr, who is pleased to express great approbation of my works. Be so good as to send me Fergusson, by Connel,‡ and I will remit you the money. I have no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline, they are just going on in the old way. I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable—news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith;§ he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline. I can scarcely

* ["The Buchanites were a small community of enthusiasts, who believed the time to be at hand when there would neither be marriage nor giving in marriage—when the ground, instead of thistles and heather, would yield spontaneously the finest fruits—when all things under the sun would be in common—and 'our lady,' so they called Mrs. Buchan, reign spiritual queen of the earth. At first they held the doctrine of immediate translation, but a night spent in wild prayer, wild song, and wilder sermons on the top of a cold hill rebuked this part of their belief, but strengthened them in the opinion regarding their empire on earth, and confirmed 'our lady' in the resolution of making a tour through her imaginary dominions. She accordingly moved towards Nithsdale with all her people—some were in carts, some on horseback, and not a few on foot. She rode in front upon a white pony: and often halted to lecture them upon the loveliness of the land, and to cheer them with food from what she called her 'Garner of mercy,' and with drink from a large cup called 'The comforter.' She addressed all people as she passed along with much mildness, and spoke to them in the language of their callings. 'James Macleish,' she said to a gardener, who went to see her, 'quit Mr. Copland's garden, and come and work in that of the Lord.'—'Thank ye,' answered James, 'but he was na owre kind to the last gardener he had.' 'Our lady' died at Auchengibardhill in Galloway, and her followers were dispersed—a few of the more resolute believers took a farm: the women spun and made large quantities of linen; the men ploughed and sowed, and made articles of turnery—their lives were inoffensive and their manners gentle—they are now all dead and gone."—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [To John Richmond we are indebted for some valuable information respecting the early days and works of the Poet of Ayr-shire, for he was the companion of many of his evening hours, knew of all his poems and songs, and was acquainted with his outgoings and incomings among the dames of Kyle. Burns loved him for the frankness of his heart, and respected him for his learning, which was at least equal to what was required by a Writer in a country village. He is the sole survivor of all the Mauchline comrades of the Poet; and was then pursuing his legal studies in Edinburgh; he now resides in his native place, and rejoices in the fame of his friend.

‡ [Connel was the Mauchline carrier.—*Ibid.*]

§ [Smith was then a shop-keeper in Mauchline. It was to him that Burns addressed one of his epistles, beginning,

"Dear Smith, the sleest paukie thief."

forgive your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let me hear from you regularly by Connel. If you would act your part as a friend, I am sure neither good nor bad fortune should strange or alter me. Excuse haste, as I got your's but yesterday.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours,

ROBERT BURNESS.

No. XI.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR,*

KILMARNOCK.

Mossgiel, 20th March, 1786.

DEAR SIR:

I AM heartily sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as you returned through Mauchline; but as I was engaged, I could not be in town before the evening.

I here enclose you my "Scotch Drink," and "may the —— follow with a blessing for your edification." I hope, sometime before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us, in a mutchkin-stoup; which will be a great comfort and consolation to,

Dear Sir,

Your humble servant,

ROBERT BURNESS.

No. XII.

TO MR. AIKEN.

Mossgiel, 3rd April, 1786.

DEAR SIR:

I RECEIVED your kind letter with double pleasure, on account of the second flattering instance of Mrs. C.'s notice and approbation. I assure you I

"Turn out the brunt side o' my shin,"

as the famous Ramsay, of jingling memory, says, at such a patroness. Present her my most grateful acknowledgments in your very best manner of telling truth. I have inscribed the following stanza on the blank leaf of Miss More's Work.†

My proposals for publishing I am just going to send to press. I expect to hear from you by the first opportunity.

I am ever, dear Sir, yours,

ROBERT BURNESS.‡

No. XIII.

TO MR. M'WHINNIE,

WRITER, AYR.

Mossgiel, 17th April, 1786.

IT IS injuring some hearts, those hearts that elegantly bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my own feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the enclosed, because I know it will gratify yours to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment which stamps the die with—with—with, perhaps, the eternal disgrace of,

My dear Sir,

Your humble,

afflicted, tormented,

ROBERT BURNS.§

No. XIV.

TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.

Mossgiel, 20th April, 1786.

SIR,

BY some neglect in Mr. Hamilton, I did not hear of your kind request for a subscription paper 'till this day. I will not attempt any acknowledgment for this, nor the manner in which I see your name in Mr. Hamilton's sub-

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He died in the West Indies. Cromek, who first gave this letter to the public, says this is the only letter he had met with in which the Poet added the termination *ess* to his name, as his father and family had spelled it; but in the letters immediately following, he still adhered to the ancient orthography.]

* [Mr. Muir was a staunch friend of the Poet, and did him many good offices. When the Edinburgh edition of his Poems was announced by subscription, he put down his name for *forty copies*, and used all his influence among his friends and acquaintances to induce them to be equally liberal. This was true friendship.]

† [See "Lines to Mrs. C.," page 325.]

‡ [This is the last time that the Poet spelt his name according to his forefathers: his poems were now in the press, and he had to make his election. Indeed, the family aver that in the Montrose archives the name is sometimes written Burnes, but this seems not to affect the pronunciation, which was always Burness, till the Bard of Ayr deprived it of a syllable. The Miss More alluded to is the celebrated Hannah More, author of "Practical Piety," and numerous other moral and religious works.]

§ [Burns, in this letter, enclosed some subscription lists for the first edition of his poems. He had many friends in Ayr-shire; and it is gratifying to know that this gentleman, as well as the rest of the Poet's friends, was not backward in fulfilling the wishes of the Bard. Mr. M'Whinnie not only subscribed himself, but induced many others to do the same.]

scription list. Allow me only to say, Sir, I feel the weight of the debt.

I have here likewise inclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions.* I am a good deal pleased with some sentiments myself, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which, as the elegantly melting Gray says, "melancholy has marked for her own."

Our race comes on a-pace; that much expected scene of revelry and mirth; but to me it brings no joy equal to that meeting with which your last flattered the expectation of,

Sir,
Your indebted humble Servant,
R. B.

No. XV.

TO Mr. JOHN KENNEDY.

Mossgiel, 17th May, 1786.

Dear Sir,

I have sent you the above hasty copy as I promised.† In about three or four weeks I shall probably set the press a-going. I am much hurried at present, otherwise your diligence, so very friendly in my subscription, should have a more lengthened acknowledgment from

Dear Sir,
Your obliged Servant,
R. B.

No. XVI.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE,

OF AYR.

June 1786.

Honoured Sir:

My proposals came to hand last night, and knowing that you would wish to have it in your power to do me a service as early as any body, I enclose you half a sheet of them. I must consult you, first opportunity, on the propriety of sending my quondam friend, Mr. Aiken, a copy. If he is now reconciled to my character as an honest man, I would do it with all my soul; but I would not be beholden to the noblest being ever God created, if he imagined me to be a rascal. Apropos, old Mr. Armour prevailed with him to mutilate that unlucky paper yesterday. Would you believe it?—though I had not a hope, nor even a wish, to make her mine after her conduct; yet, when he told me the names were all out of the paper, my heart died within me, and he cut my veins with the news. Perdition seize her falsehood!‡

R. B.

No. XVII.

TO Mr. DAVID BRICE.§

Mossgiel, June 12, 1786.

Dear Brice:

I received your message by G. Paterson, and, as I am not very throng at present, I just write to let you know that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention, or you to hear.

Poor ill-advised, ungrateful Armour came home on Friday last.‖ You have heard all the particulars of that affair, and a black affair it is. What she thinks of her conduct now, I don't know; one thing I do know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored, a woman more than I did her; and, to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her, which I don't want to do. My poor dear unfortunate Jean! how happy have I been in thy arms! It is not the losing her that makes me so unhappy, but for her sake I feel most severely: I foresee she is in the road to, I am afraid, eternal ruin.

May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul forgive her; and may His grace be with her and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. I have tried often to forget her; I have run into all kinds of dissipation and riots, mason-meetings, drinking-matches, and other mischief, to drive her out of my head, but all in vain. And now for a grand cure; the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to

* [The small piece which the Poet enclosed was the inimitable "Mountain Daisy." The name which heads the manuscript is "The Gowan." It is almost a pity that the Poet changed the title.]

† [The Poet's Epistle to Rankine was enclosed in this hasty note. Burns seems to have been indefatigable in making his works known through the medium of friends: the copies of his best poems in his own hand-writing are numerous. His correspondents, living often at a distance from each other, were pleased with this mark of confidence, and read his poems to all who were willing to listen.]

‡ [In this letter we have a plain account of the destruction of the marriage-lines between the Poet and his bonnie Jean: her father consulted Mr. Aiken, and prevailed upon him to tear their names away from the unlucky certificate. Burns now alludes to Mr. Aiken as his *quondam* friend. Old Armour, by his bigoted pride, and foolish scruples, seems to have inflicted unnecessary anguish on two hearts warmly attached to each other.]

§ [David Brice was a shoe-maker in Glasgow, and, like most of his craft, shrewd and intelligent. He shared with Smith and Richmond the confidence of the Poet in love matters, and seems to have been fully acquainted with all the particulars which inspired that melancholy poem "The Lament."—Cunningham.]

‖ [From Paisley, whither she had gone to reside for some time, at the request of her parents.]

Jamaica; and then, farewell, dear old Scotland! and farewell, dear ungrateful Jean! for never, never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence poet in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as fast as possible.

Believe me to be, dear Brice,

Your friend and well-wisher,

R. B.

No. XVIII.

TO Mr. ROBERT AIKEN.

Ayr-shire, July 1786.

Sir:

I was with Wilson, my printer, t'other day, and settled all our by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of the first and readiest, which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper, but this, you know, is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition 'till I grow richer! an epocha which, I think, will arrive at the payment of the British national debt.

There is scarcely any thing hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition as not having it in my power to shew my gratitude to Mr. Ballantine, by publishing my poem of "The Brigs of Ayr." I would detest myself as a wretch, if I thought I were capable in a very long life of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations; but I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection; but sheerly the instinctive emotion of my heart, too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.

I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within, respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business; the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad, and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances every thing that can be laid in the scale against it.

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul: though sceptical in some points of our current belief, yet, I think, I have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stinted bourne of our present existence; if so, then, how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of existence, how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling innocency of helpless infancy? O, thou great unknown Power!—thou almighty God! who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality!—I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of thy works, yet thou hast never left me, nor forsaken me!

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet, I have seen something of the storm of mischief thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friends, my benefactors, be successful in your applications for me,* perhaps it may not be in my power in that way to reap the fruit of your friendly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages is the settled tenour of my present resolution; but should inimical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, or enjoying it only threaten to entail farther misery——

To tell the truth, I have little reason for complaint; as the world, in general, has been kind to me fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man, a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners (which last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast); still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my schoolfellows and youthful compeers (those misguided few excepted who joined, to use a Gentoo phrase, the "hallachores" of the hu-

* [An effort was at this time being made to obtain for the Poet an appointment in the Excise.]

man race) were striking off with eager hope and earnest intent, in some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was "standing idle in the market-place," or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim.

You see, Sir, that if to know one's errors were a probability of mending them, I stand a fair chance: but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it.* R. B.

No. XIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

OF DUNLOP.†

Ayr-shire, July 1786.

MADAM.

I AM truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus: nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those, whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the Saviour of his Country.

"Great patriot hero! ill-requited chief!"

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was "The Life of Hannibal;" the next was "The History of Sir William Wallace:" for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and

* [This letter was written under the distress of mind occasioned by the Poet's separation from his bonny Jean. Robert Aiken, to whom it is addressed, was one of the bard's best patrons: he praised his performances and encouraged him to persevere in song, when friends were few and the world far from smiling. By inscribing to him "The Cotter's Saturday Night," Burns paid a compliment—a merited one—to the accuracy of his taste, and the rectitude of his life. But the patron and the Poet were of different opinions regarding the situation in which he stood with Jean Armour—opposition begat coldness—and they became, for a time at least, estranged.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

[THIS excellent person died 24th May, 1815, full of days and honour, in the 85th year of her age; leaving a numerous offspring, many of whom have distinguished themselves in various parts of the British dominions. The Dunlop family was afterwards represented by her son, General James Dunlop, who was severely wounded commanding the left wing of the army at the siege of Seringapatam; the climate of the West Indies having proved fatal to his elder brother, General Andrew Dunlop, while obeying the call of his professional duty, 1819.

Frances Wallace, the only daughter and ultimately the heiress of Sir Thomas Wallace, of Craigie, in Ayr-shire, was born about the year 1731, and at the age of seventeen became the wife of John Dunlop, Esq., of Dunlop, in the same county. Although she brought her husband a very large fortune, together with the mansion of Craigie, beautifully situated on the Ayr, she was content to spend the whole of her married and dowager life, with the exception of occasional visits, in retirement at Dunlop. She there became the mother of five sons and five daughters, all of whom, except one, survived her. Her eldest son succeeded, under the name of Sir Thomas Wallace, to her paternal estate of Craigie, which, however, is not now the property of the family. Mr. Dunlop settled his own estate upon the second son, James Dunlop, a Lieutenant-General in the Army; and at one time representative of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, in parliament, whose son, John Dunlop, Esq., of Dunlop, was in 1838 member for Ayr-shire.

Without the least tincture of the pretension and parade which too often distinguish literary ladies, Mrs. Dunlop was a lady of highly cultivated understanding—fond of books, and extensively acquainted with them, and also disposed to be the kind and zealous friend of their authors. While she treated Burns with uniform affability and kindness, there was an unaffected dignity in her whole character, which seems to have at once exercised a salutary restraint over him, and raised his mind, when in communication with her's, to the exercise of its best powers. The mind of Mrs. Dunlop, overflowing with benevolent feelings, delighted in those fine emotions of the Ayr-shire poet, which found expression in the verses to a Mouse, the stanzas on a Winter Night, and the noble poem—The Cotter's Saturday Night, which first attracted her attention to the Bard. Burns, on the other hand, glowed at finding, in the heretrix of an ancient family and historical honours, a heart as warm and philanthropic as his own. Mrs. Dunlop never felt displeased with Burns but once. On a visit at her house, he asked her advice respecting his going into the Excise—a step of which she decidedly disapproved. He argued the point with her very strenuously for some time; but, at last, finding that he could not prevail upon her to look favourably on the scheme, he confessed that further discussion was vain, as he had his commission in his pocket. She could not help expressing some resentment; but soon forgave a mode of procedure but too characteristic of those who ask for advice.

After the death of Burns, Mrs. Dunlop paid a visit to Dr. Currie at Liverpool, in order to consult with him respecting the publication of the Poet's works. Dr. Currie had already perused her letters to Burns, which he had found amongst the Poet's papers; and he expressed an anxious wish that she would allow of their publication, in connection with those of Burns to herself. But Mrs. Dunlop entertained an insurmountable repugnance to all public appearances, and, notwithstanding Dr. Currie's assurances of the value of her compositions, both on their own account, and as rendering Burns's Letters the more intelligible, she positively refused to allow them to see the light. She concluded her interview by half jestingly *purchasing back* her letters from him one by one, laying a letter of Burns for each of her own, till she obtained the whole. She then returned satisfied to Dunlop House. These letters still exist, but her family feel that they would not be fulfilling her wishes by giving them to the world.—CHAMBERS.

"Of all the friendships," says Gilbert Burns, "which Robert acquired in Ayr-shire, or elsewhere, none seemed more agreeable to him than that of Mrs. Dunlop, nor any which has been more uniformly and constantly exerted in behalf of him and his family. This lady, daughter and sole heiress to Sir Thomas Wallace, of Craigie, and lineal descendant of the illustrious Wallace, the first of Scottish warriors, possessed the qualities of mind suited to her high lineage. Preserving, in the decline of life, the generous affections of youth, her admiration of the Poet was soon accompanied by a sincere friendship for the man, which continued in after life, through good and evil report; in poverty, in sickness, and in sorrow."

Mrs. Dunlop exercised a two-fold influence over the muse of Burns; she was a poetess, and had the blood of the Wallaces in her veins. Her taste and station gave her great power in the west; she praised the Poet wherever she went, and addressed letters to him remarkable not only for their good sense and good feeling, but for a spirit of charity and toleration not common in those feverish times. She now and then, indeed, introduced not a few of her own verses into her correspondence; but she seems not to have been greedy of praise, nor to have resented her friend's want of courtesy when he forgot to commend her musings. She lived to a good old age; had the satisfaction to see the ancient spirit

many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious, but unfortunate, stories. In those boyish days I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

> "Syne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
> To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half-a-dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymer) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits.

R. B.

No. XX.

TO Mr. DAVID BRICE,

SHOE-MAKER, GLASGOW.

Mossgiel, 17th July, 1786.

I HAVE been so throng printing my Poems that I could scarcely find as much time as to write to you. Poor Armour is come back again to Mauchline, and I went to call for her, and her mother forbade me the house, nor did she herself express much sorrow for what she has done. I have already appeared publicly in church, and was indulged in the liberty of standing in my own seat. I do this to get a certificate as a bachelor, which Mr. Auld has promised me. I am now fixed to go for the West Indies in October. Jean and her friends insisted much that she should stand along with me in the kirk, but the minister would not allow it, which bred a great trouble, I assure you, and I am blamed as the cause of it, though I am sure I am innocent; but I am very much pleased, for all that, not to have had her company. I have no news to tell you that I remember. I am really happy to hear of your welfare, and that you are so well in Glasgow. I must certainly see you before I leave the country. I shall expect to hear from you soon, and am,

Dear Brice,

Yours,—R. B.

No. XXI.

TO Mr. JOHN RICHMOND.

Old Rome Forest, 30th July, 1786.

MY DEAR RICHMOND:

MY hour is now come—you and I will never meet in Britain more. I have orders, within three weeks at farthest, to repair a-board the Nancy, Captain Smith, from Clyde, to Jamaica, and to call at Antigua. This, except to our friend Smith, whom God long preserve, is a secret about Mauchline. Would you believe it? Armour has got a warrant to throw me in jail till I find security for an enormous sum. This they keep an entire secret, but I got it by a channel they little dream of; and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the gospel, "have no where to lay my head." I know you will pour an execration on her head, but spare the poor, ill-advised girl, for my sake; though may all the furies that rend the injured, enraged lover's bosom, await her mother until her latest hour! I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation—exiled, abandoned, forlorn. I can write no more—let me hear from you by the return of coach. I will write you ere I go.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours, here and hereafter,

R. B.*

No. XXII.

TO Mr. JAMES SMITH,†

MAUCHLINE.

Monday Morning, Mossgiel, August, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR:

I WENT to Dr. Douglas yesterday, fully resolved to take the opportunity of Captain Smith; but I found the Doctor with a Mr. and Mrs. White, both Jamaicans, and they have deranged my plans altogether. They assure him that to send me from Savannah la Mar to Port Antonio will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleuritic fever, in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts, he refuses sending me with Smith, but a vessel sails from

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of the Wallaces revive in her son the General, and to know that Scotland reverenced her for her unchanging kindness to the equally accomplished and unfortunate Burns.—CUNNINGHAM.]

* [The Poet, when he wrote this letter, was skulking from Carrick to Kyle, and from Kyle to Carrick; "some ill-advised persons," he said, had "uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at his heels." But Mr. Armour had no wish to detain him till he found bail: he was desirous that he should leave the country; and, to accomplish this, had recourse to the law. These are painful but necessary explanations.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [Of James Smith much has already been written in the Life of the Poet: Burns said he was small of stature, but large of soul; he was a joyous and witty person. The Poet was a frequent visiter at his shop in Mauchline, and shared with him and John Richmond all his little secrets in rhyme and love. The world was not kinder to him than it was to the Poet: his speculations in Scotland failed; he went to Jamaica with the hope of mending his fortune, and there found an early grave.—*Ibid.*]

Greenock the first of September, right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate friend of Mr. Gavin Hamilton, and as good a fellow as heart could wish: with him I am destined to go. Where I shall shelter, I know not, but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it:—

"I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow."

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o'clock, I shall see you as I ride through to Cumnock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them:—

"O woman, lovely woman! Heaven design'd you
To temper man!—we had been brutes without you!"

R. B.

No. XXIII.

TO Mr. JOHN KENNEDY.

Kilmarnock, August 1786.

My dear Sir,

Your truly facetious epistle of the 3rd instant gave me much entertainment. I was sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as I passed your way, but we shall bring up all our lee way on Wednesday, the 16th current, when I hope to have it in my power to call on you and take a kind, very probably a last, adieu, before I go for Jamaica; and I expect orders to repair to Greenock every day.—I have at last made my public appearance, and am solemnly inaugurated into the numerous class.—Could I have got a carrier, you should have had a score of vouchers for my Authorship; but now you have them, let them speak for themselves.

R. B.

[The Poet here inserts his "Farewell," which will be found at page 327.]

No. XXIV.

TO Mr. ROBERT MUIR,

KILMARNOCK.*

Mossgiel, Friday noon, September, 1786.

My Friend, my Brother:

Warm recollection of an absent friend presses so hard upon my heart that I send him the prefixed bagatelle (the Calf,) pleased with the thought that it will greet the man of my bosom, and be a kind of distant language of friendship.

You will have heard that poor Armour has re-paid me double. A very fine boy and a girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul.

The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr. Hamilton, that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time.

If you think it worth while, read it to Charles and Mr. W. Parker, and if they choose a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive, but more of this when, in the latter part of next week, you shall be troubled with a visit from,

My dear Sir,

Your most devoted,

R. B.

No. XXV.

TO Mr. BURNESS,

MONTROSE.

Mossgiel, Tuesday noon, Sept. 26, 1786.

My dear Sir:

I this moment receive yours—receive it with the honest hospitable warmth of a friend's welcome. Whatever comes from you wakens always up the better blood about my heart, which your kind little recollections of my parental friends carries as far as it will go. 'Tis there that man is blest! 'Tis there, my friend, man feels a consciousness of something within him above the trodden clod! The grateful reverence to the hoary (earthly) author of his being—the burning glow when he clasps the woman of his soul to his bosom—the tender yearnings of heart for the little angels to whom he has given existence—these nature has poured in milky streams about the human heart; and the man who never rouses them to action, by the inspiring influences of their proper objects, loses by far the most pleasurable part of his existence.

My departure is uncertain, but I do not think it will be till after harvest. I will be on very short allowance of time indeed, if I do not comply with your friendly invitation. When it will be, I don't know, but if I can make my

* [Robert Muir of Kilmarnock was a constant and kind friend to the Poet; he promoted his interest in his own wide circle of acquaintance, and set the world an example by subscribing for forty copies of the Edinburgh edition of his poems.]

wish good, I will endeavour to drop you a line some time before. My best compliments to Mrs. ——; I should [be] equally mortified should I drop in when she is abroad; but of that I suppose there is little chance.

What I have wrote Heaven knows; I have not time to review it: so accept of it in the beaten way of friendship. With the ordinary phrase—perhaps rather more than the ordinary sincerity—I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

R. B.

No. XXVI.

TO Dr. ARCHD. LAWRIE.

Mossgiel, Nov. 13th, 1786.

Dear Sir:

I have, along with this, sent the two volumes of Ossian, with the remaining volume of the songs. Ossian I am not in such a hurry about, but I wish the songs, with the volume of the Scotch Poets, returned, as soon as they can be conveniently dispatched. If they are left at Mr. Wilson's, the bookseller, Kilmarnock, they will easily reach me. My most respectable compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrie, and a Poet's warm wishes for their happiness;—to the young ladies, particularly the fair musician, whom I think much better qualified than ever David was, or could be, to charm an evil spirit out of Saul. Indeed, it needs not the feelings of a Poet to be interested in one of the sweetest scenes of domestic peace and kindred love that ever I saw, as I think the peaceful unity of St. Margaret's Hill can only be excelled by the harmonious concord of the Apocalypse.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

Robert Burns.

[This truly delightful letter first appeared in The Land of Burns. Our Poet excelled all other men in well-timed compliments to those exalted individuals with whom it was his pride to associate. The family circle of Dr. Lawrie was indeed a pattern of domestic peace, harmony, and concord, rarely excelled.]

No. XXVII.

TO Miss ALEXANDER.

Mossgiel, 18*th Nov.* 1786.

Madam:

Poets are such outré beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the enclosed poem, which he begs leave to present you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge; but it is the best my abilities can produce; and, what to a good heart will, perhaps, be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *reveur* as he wandered by you. I had roved out, as chance directed, in the favourite haunts of my muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you—your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene,—and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect I spied one of the fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye, those visionary bards excepted who hold commerce with aërial beings! Had Calumny and Villainy taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain dull historic prose into metaphor and measure.

The enclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene.

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your most obedient and very

humble servant,

R. B.

[In the life of the Poet, and in the note to the song which this letter accompanied, much has been said about "The Bonnie Lass of Ballochmyle." The best excuse which can well be

offered for her silence and coldness is that she lived to see how much she wronged her own fame and beauty in not accepting the honours which the muse had paid her, and to make such reparation as was in her power, by regarding the original copy of the song as an heir-loom of the house of Alexander. The braes of Ballochmyle are now visited like the braes of Yarrow and the broom of the Cowden-Knowes, by poetic pilgrims, and the scene is eagerly pointed out where the Poet saw the fair vision which inspired him.—Miss Alexander is still alive, at Ballochmyle [1840].

No. XXVIII.

TO Mrs. STEWART,

OF STAIR.*

November, 1786.

MADAM:

THE hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promise so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c., which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. Perhaps some of them may be no great entertainment to you, but of that I am far from being an adequate judge. The song to the tune of "Ettrick Banks" [The bonnie lass of Ballochmyle] you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much, even in manuscript. I think, myself, it has some merit: both as a tolerable description of one of nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening; and one of the finest pieces of nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we know any thing of, an amiable, beautiful young woman;† but I have no common friend to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high ancestry, their own great and god-like qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your connexions in life, and have no access to where your real character is to be found—the company of your compeers: and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember;—the reception I got when I had the honour of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness, but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper and goodness of heart.—Surely did those in exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs. Stewart of Stair.

R. B.

No. XXIX.

TO Mr. ROBERT MUIR.

Mossgiel, 18*th Nov.*, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR:

ENCLOSED you have "Tam Samson," as I intend to print him. I am thinking for my Edinburgh expedition on Monday or Tuesday, come se'ennight, for pos.‡ I will see you on Tuesday first.

I am ever,

Your much indebted,

R. B.

* [Mrs. Stewart of Stair, afterwards of Afton, was the first person of note who had the sagacity to discover in the Ayrshire ploughman a genius of the first order. Two or three of his songs were sufficient for this: it has already been related how his heart fluttered and his natural boldness forsook him as he walked through the rooms of the "towers of Stair" to see the fair owner for the first time. It is to be regretted that the political impetuosity of Burns, which increased much as he advanced in life, should have found vent in sarcastic sayings and sneering lampoons. Mrs. Stewart remonstrated mildly with the Poet concerning these transgressions, and told him that they furnished many with a pretext for not aiding him in his views in life, and even threw suspicion on the principles of his steadfast friends. Something like a coolness followed this; but, though Burns was nettled, he omitted no opportunity of intimating how much he felt indebted to her for her early kindness and cheering condescension.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† Miss Alexander.

‡ [The Edinburgh expedition was undertaken in consequence of the following letter, written by a critic and a poet, Thomas Blacklock, to the Rev. Mr. Lawrie, who communicated it to Gavin Hamilton, by whom it was shown to Burns:—

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I ought to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and, perhaps one of the most genuine entertainments, of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. * * * It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

Mr. Stewart, professor of morals in this university, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers: but whether this was done or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. * * * * *"

[The passages omitted have been already given in the LIFE of the Poet. See p. 39.]

No. XXX.

TO Dr. MACKENZIE,*

MAUCHLINE;

ENCLOSING HIM VERSES ON DINING WITH LORD DAER.

Wednesday Morning, November, 1786.

Dear Sir:

I never spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when, in company with you, I had the honour of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, the professor [Dugald Stewart]. I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such a grace. I think his character, divided into ten parts, stands thus—four parts Socrates—four parts Nathaniel—and two parts Shakspeare's Brutus.

The accompanying verses were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little with the help of that partiality with which you are so good as to favour the performances of,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

R. B.

No. XXXI.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.†

MAUCHLINE.

Edinburgh, Dec. 7th, 1786.

Honoured Sir:

I have paid every attention to your commands, but can only say what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muirkirklands were bought by a Mr. John Gordon, W. S., but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh Miln, &c., by a Mr. Frederick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyle Laird, and Adam-hill and Shawood were bought for Oswald's folks.—This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner, nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day inserted among the wonderful events, in the poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the black Monday, and the battle of Bothwell-bridge.—My Lord Glencairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise, man of the world. Through my lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian Hunt that they universally, one and all, subscribe for the second edition.—My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post.—I have met, in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr. Aiken, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days shewed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but you both in prose and verse.

May cauld ne'er catch you *but a hap,*‡
Nor hunger but in plenty's lap!

Amen! R. B.

No. XXXII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.,§

BANKER, AYR.

Edinburgh, 13*th Dec.*, 1786.

My honoured Friend:

I would not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which by the bye is often no easy task.—I arrived here on Tuesday was

* [The kind and venerable Dr. Mackenzie is now, alas! no more. He was, saving John Richmond, the sole survivor of the friends whom Burns numbered in the west. To him the public are indebted for much valuable information respecting the household of William Burness, and the youthful days of the Poet. He introduced Burns to Dugald Stewart and others, and sought to extend his fame, and put him on the way to fortune. This excellent man afterwards practised for many years as a surgeon in Irvine, where he attained the highest honours of the magistracy. In 1827 he retired to Edinburgh, where he died January 11th, 1837, at an advanced age.]

† [Gavin Hamilton was a gentleman of old descent, and, what the Poet prized more, a person of wit and talent. At his table Burns was a frequent guest, and flashes of humour and snatches of joyous song, with good wine, lent wings to the longest nights. It is true that the Bard sat long at the table, and it is also true that he hesitated not to fall in love with Mrs. Hamilton's servant-maids: but dreigh-drinking was, in those days, regarded as a mark of a man's affection for his neighbour; and as for an hour's love and daffing with the lasses, it was expected;—a young fellow was set down as a sumph if he hesitated.—Allan Cunningham.]

‡ [Without a cloak or great-coat.]

§ [To John Ballantine the Poet not only addressed "The Brigs of Ayr," but resorted to him for good advice when the clouds of misfortune darkened above him, and fortune, in his own words, used him hard and sharp. He was a good and a wise man, and improved much the "Auld town of Ayr" during the period of his provostship. It would appear by this letter that the Poet was in some degree reconciled to Mr. Aiken: it seems not to have been cordial, for he is no longer numbered among his correspondents.—Cunningham.]

se'nnight, and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable head-ache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better.—I have found a worthy, warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me I shall remember when time shall be no more.—By his interest it is passed in the "Caledonian Hunt," and entered in their books, that they are to take each a copy of the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea.—I have been introduced to a good many of the *noblesse*, but my avowed patrons and patronesses are, the Duchess of Gordon—the Countess of Glencairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty*—the Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord.—I have likewise warm friends among the literati; Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr. Mackenzie—the Man of Feeling.—An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayr-shire bard with Mr. Sibbald, which I got.—I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq., brother to the Justice Clerk; and drank a glass of claret with him by invitation at his own house yester-night. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday. I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr. Aiken. I saw his son to-day, and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper called the Lounger,† a copy of which I here enclose you. —I was, Sir, when I was first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever-honoured patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter-of-fact epistle.

I have the honour to be,

Good Sir,

Your ever grateful humble servant,

R. B.

If any of my friends write me, my direction is, care of Mr. Creech, bookseller.

* Lady Betty Cunningham.

† The paper here alluded to was written by Mr. Mackenzie, the celebrated author of "The Man of Feeling."

No. XXXIII.

TO Mr. ROBERT MUIR.‡

Edinburgh, Dec. 20th, 1786.

My dear Friend:

I have just time for the carrier, to tell you that I received your letter; of which I shall say no more but what a lass of my acquaintance said of her bastard wean; she said she "did na ken wha was the father exactly, but she suspected it was some o' thae bonny blackguard smugglers, for it was like them." So I only say your obliging epistle was like you. I enclose you a parcel of subscription bills. Your affair of sixty copies is also like you; but it would not be like me to comply.

Your friend's notion of my life has put a crotchet in my head of sketching it in some future epistle to you. My compliments to Charles and Mr. Parker.

R. B.

No. XXXIV.

TO Mr. WILLIAM CHALMERS.§

WRITER, AYR.

Edinburgh, Dec. 27th, 1786.

My dear Friend:

I confess I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to have sent you an entertaining letter: and by all the plodding, stupid powers, that in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business —a heavily-solemn oath this!—I am, and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humour as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both Emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the Greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or other, known by the name of James the Less—after throwing him

‡ [The kindness and generosity of Robert Muir, of Kilmarnock, were not unfelt by the Poet; and we must accept it as a proof of Burns's powers of pleasing that he acquired, so early in life, the regard of so many western worthies. In this letter we have the first intimation of that account of himself which he afterwards wrote and addressed to Dr. Moore, and we also have satisfactory evidence of the substantial patronage of his Ayr-shire friends.]

§ [Burns taxed his muse to propitiate with song a lady of the West, to whom William Chalmers was paying his addresses: the success of the verse is not known. See page 250.]

into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedee to a desert island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered, I enclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I past Glenbuck.

One blank in the address to Edinburgh—"Fair B———," is the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter of Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is—care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge-street.

R. B.

No. XXXV.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

MAUCHLINE.

Edinburgh, January 7th, 1787.

* * * *

To tell the truth, among friends, I feel a miserable blank in my heart from the want of her [alluding to Jean Armour], and I don't think I shall ever meet with so delicious an armful again. She has her faults; but so have you and I; and so has every body.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft;
They've ta'en me in and a' that;
But clear your decks, and here's the sex,
I like the jades for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that!

* * * *

I have met with a very pretty girl, a Lothian farmer's daughter, whom I have almost persuaded to accompany me to the west country, should I ever return to settle there.—By the bye, a Lothian farmer is about the same as an Ayr-shire squire of the lower kind.—I had a most delicious ride from Leith to her house yesternight, in a hackney coach, with her brother and two sisters, and brother's wife. We had dined altogether at a common friend's house, in Leith, and drank, danced, and sang, till late enough. The night was dark, the claret had been good, and I thirsty ———

[The remainder is unfortunately wanting.]

No. XXXVI.

TO THE EARL OF EGLINTON.*

Edinburgh, January, 1787.

My Lord:

As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world, but have all those national prejudices which I believe glow peculiarly strong in the breast of a Scotchman. There is scarcely any thing to which I am so feelingly alive as the honour and welfare of my country: and, as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life; but never did a heart pant more ardently than mine to be distinguished; though, till very lately, I looked in vain on every side for a ray of light. It is easy then to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr. Wauchope called on me yesterday on the part of your lordship. Your munificence, my lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgments; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks, but my heart whispered me to do it.—From the emotions of my inmost soul I do it. Selfish ingratitude I hope I am incapable of; and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have so much honest pride as to detest.

R. B.

No. XXXVII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.

Edinburgh, Jan. 14, 1787.

My honoured Friend:

It gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw's Skate, "past redemption;"† for I have

* [When the Poet exclaimed, in his "Earnest cry and Prayer,"

"O could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswell,"

he included Archibald, eleventh earl of Eglinton, and Colonel Hugh Montgomery of Coilsfield, afterwards twelfth earl, in the compliment. This was re-paid by subscribing ten guineas for two copies of the Poet's works, and a promise of patronage. Boswell seems not, though a native of the banks of Lugar, to have relished his portion of the compliment;—he did not subscribe, neither has he once alluded to Burns or his genius throughout all his writings.]

† [This is one of a great number of old saws that Burns, when a lad, had picked up from his mother, who had a vast collection of such fragments of traditionary wisdom.]

still this favourable symptom of grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teases me eternally till I do it.

I am still "dark as was chaos" in respect to futurity. My generous friend, Mr. Patrick Miller, has been talking with me about a lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought near Dumfries. Some life-rented embittering recollections whisper me that I will be happier any where than in my old neighbourhood, but Mr. Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he means to favour me, yet he may give me, in his opinion, an advantageous bargain that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr. Miller on his lands some time in May.

I went to a mason-lodge yesternight, where the most Worshipful Grand Master Chartres, and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited.—The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different lodges about town were present, in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honour to himself, as a gentleman and mason, among other general toasts, gave "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother Burns,"—which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck, and, trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, "Very well indeed!" which set me something to rights again.

I have to-day corrected my 152d page. My best good wishes to Mr. Aiken.

I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Your much indebted humble Servant,

R. B.

No. XXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

January —, 1787.

While here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound, Auld Toun o' Ayr, conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine. Here it is—

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care! * &c.

No. XXXIX.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, 15th January, 1787.

Madam:

Yours of the 9th current, which I am this moment honoured with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a fib—I wished to have written to Dr. Moore before I wrote to you; but, though every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of "the sons of little men." To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant's order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the author of "The View of Society and Manners" a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas, by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.

The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman and your immortal ancestor, is indeed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet. I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honour me with their critical strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed any thing on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print; and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition.† You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my "Vision" long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood. My heart glows with a wish to be able to do justice to the merits of the "Saviour of his Country," which sooner or later I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet; alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not

* [See "The Banks of Doon," page 409.]

† [See Stanzas in the "Vision," page 206, beginning "By stately tower or palace fair," to the end of the first Duan.]

mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserve some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude, unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice which has borne me to a height, where I am absolutely, feelingly certain my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and, however a friend or the world may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you once for all to dis-burthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But,

"When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,"

you will bear me witness that, when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve to the hastening time when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph.

* * * *

Your patronizing me and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in; it exalts me in my own idea: and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifle. Has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace? R. B.

No. XL.

TO DR. MOORE.*

Edinburgh, Jan., 1787.

SIR:

MRS. DUNLOP has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honour of

* [John Moore, M.D., one of the first men of established literary reputation, who befriended the Ayr-shire Poet, was the son of the Rev. Charles Moore, of Stirling. The latter, although born in Ireland, was a cadet of the Scotch house of Mure of Rowallan, in Ayr-shire; his ancestor, Captain Alexander Mure, the son of Sir William Mure of Rowallan, having been slain in an action about the year 1648, with the rebels in Ireland, where his family continued to reside. The son of this gentleman was a military officer, who also served in Ireland under William III.; and it was owing to the family connexion with Scotland, as much as to his talents, and exemplary character, that the son of the last Captain Moore was, although an alien to the country, advanced in early life to the parochial charge at Stirling, where his son, Dr. John Moore, the subject of the present notice, was born in 1730. The family of Mure of Rowallan is said to have been originally of the tribe of O'More, in Ireland. Robert II., King of Scotland, married Elizabeth Mure, daughter of Sir Adam Mure of Rowallan, and from this marriage the Royal family of Stuart is descended.

While Dr. Moore was yet a child, his father died, and his mother removed with him to Glasgow, where she possessed some property, inherited from her father, Anderson of Dowhill, whose family, once in great affluence in that city, had suffered much, according to Wodrow, from fines imposed in the reign of James II., for their adherence to Presbyterianism; and the participation of the last laird of Dowhill in the Darien expedition reduced the family to comparative poverty. On a temperament such as that of the author of Zeluco, the position in which his earlier years were passed exercised no inconsiderable influence in promoting those habits of industry and exertion for which, in after life, he was eminently distinguished. At Glasgow, Dr. Moore received both his elementary and academical education. So precocious were his talents that, in 1747, when only 17 years of age, he was honoured with the especial patronage of Colonel Campbell, afterwards fifth Duke of Argyle, by whom he was introduced to the hospitals connected with the British Army in Flanders, and brought under the notice of various distinguished officers, as a young man likely to be an ornament to the medical profession. At the conclusion of the war, he was for some time an *attaché* to the British Embassy of Lord Albemarle, in Paris. He afterwards settled in practice in Glasgow, as the partner of Mr. Hamilton, the University Professor of Anatomy. While, however, the professional accomplishments of Dr. Moore were never made the subject of doubt, a certain dislike to the drudgery of medical practice prevented him from enjoying that amount of public patronage to which, by his talents, he was entitled. It was, therefore, with no unwilling mind that, early in 1769, though for some years married and the father of several children, he agreed to take the charge of the young Duke of Hamilton, step-son of his first patron, a youth of fourteen, possessed of the most excellent dispositions, but whose health was such as to require the constant attendance of a physician. With this young nobleman, Dr. Moore made one short excursion to the Continent. But the connexion was abruptly dissolved, in July, by the death of the Duke, upon whose tomb his affectionate attendant inscribed a poetical epitaph, testifying to the promise which was thus early blighted.

In the following year, Dr. Moore was selected to attend the brother and heir of the deceased Duke—the noted Douglas, Duke of Hamilton, then a sickly boy, and as yet innocent of the vices that ultimately clouded a career which talent and generosity had combined with almost princely rank and fortune, to render illustrious. Dr. Moore and this young nobleman spent five years in continental travel, finally returning in 1778, when the Duke had attained his majority. In that year Dr. Moore removed his family to London, with the design of prosecuting his profession in a higher sphere than could be commanded in Glasgow. As yet, he had given no decided proof of his literary talents; but this he did in the following year, by the publication of his "View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany," a work of so much vivacity and intelligence that it instantly attained a great popularity, and was translated into French, German, and Italian. In 1785, he produced his "Medical Sketches," a work which treats on several important topics, relative to health and disease, not without an intermixture of pleasant stories and humorous sarcasm. It was at the close of the ensuing year that his attention was drawn to the poetry of Burns. Some expressions of admiration, which he had employed regarding it, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, and which that lady transmitted to Burns, led to a correspondence between the learned Physician and the comparatively unlettered Bard, in which the one party appears kind, without the least affectation of superiority, and the other respectful with as little display of servility. To Dr. Moore, the Poet, in the ensuing August, addressed a sketch of his own life, which was published in the front of Dr. Currie's memoir,

noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and solicitudes of authorship can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed, in such a manner, by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I receive with reverence: only I am sorry they mostly came too late: a peccant passage or two, that I would certainly have altered, were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities: and as few, if any, writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had: and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear; where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttleton and Collins described the heart; I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

R. B.

No. XLI.

TO THE Rev. G. LAWRIE,*

NEWMILLS, NEAR KILMARNOCK.

Edinburgh, Feb. 5th, 1787.

Reverend and dear Sir:

When I look at the date of your kind letter, my heart reproaches me severely with ingrati-

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and has effectually associated the names of these very opposite men in our literary history.

Dr. Moore, when on the verge of sixty (1789), appeared for the first time as a writer of fiction. His novel of "Zeluco" assumed, and has ever since maintained, a high rank amongst works of that class, on account of the powerful moral painting which forms the most conspicuous feature of its composition. The interest which he felt in the affairs of France induced him to proceed, late in the summer of 1792, to Paris. He there witnessed the insurrection of the 10th of August, the dethronement of the King, the terrific massacres of September, and the tremendous party struggles which marked the remainder of that year. He was consequently enabled to gratify the curiosity of the British public by a work entitled "A Journal during a Residence in France," &c., which is allowed by Dr. Aiken to be written with impartiality and discernment. After several years spent in ease and retirement, at Richmond, he died at his house in Clifford-street, London, February 29, 1802. He left five sons, the eldest of whom was the gallant and lamented General Sir John Moore.—Land of Burns.

To the accomplished Dr. Moore the Poet seems to have unbosomed himself more than to most of his patronizing friends. Nor is this to be wondered at—Moore was not only a fine scholar and a man of genius, but he was one of the kindest and most accessible of mankind. Burns seems to have possessed a natural tact for discovering how far he might go in laying his bosom bare to his companions and correspondents, and he certainly hit, as if by inspiration, the character of Dr. Moore, who, with the secrecy of a physician, and the prudence of a friend, received the communications of the rustic bard, read to the London literati such portions of the Poet's letters as he knew would be most relished; quoted the finest passages of his poems, and spread his fame with a diligence which could only arise from a hearty appreciation of his great merit. Dr. Moore's letter, to which the above was a reply, is as follows:—

Clifford-street, London, Jan. 23rd, 1787.

"Sir,—I have just received your letter, by which I find I have reason to complain of my friend Mrs. Dunlop, for transmitting to you extracts from my letters to her, by much too freely and too carelessly written for your perusal. I must forgive her, however, in consideration of her good intention, as you will forgive me, I hope, for the freedom I use with certain expressions, in consideration of my admiration of the poems in general. If I may judge of the author's disposition from his works, with all the other good qualities of a poet, he has not the irritable temper ascribed to that race of men by one of their own number, whom you have the happiness to resemble in ease and curious felicity of expression. Indeed, the poetical beauties, however original and brilliant, and lavishly scattered, are not all I admire in your works;—the love of your native country, that feeling sensibility to all the objects of humanity, and the independent spirit which breathes through the whole, give me a most favourable impression of the Poet, and have made me often regret that I did not see the poems, the certain effect of which would have been my seeing the author, last summer, when I was longer in Scotland than I have been for many years.

"I rejoice very sincerely at the encouragement you receive at Edinburgh, and I think you peculiarly fortunate in the patronage of Dr. Blair, who I am informed interests himself very much for you. I beg to be remembered to him; nobody can have a warmer regard for that gentleman than I have, which, independent of the worth of his character, would be kept alive by the memory of our common friend, the late Mr. George B——e.

"Before I received your letter, I sent enclosed in a letter to ————, a sonnet by Miss Williams, a young poetical lady, which she wrote on reading your "Mountain-daisy;" perhaps it may not displease you:—

"'While soon 'the garden's flaunting flowers' decay,
And scatter'd on the earth neglected lie,
The 'Mountain-daisy,' cherish'd by the ray
A poet drew from heaven, shall never die.
Ah, like that lonely flower the poet rose!
'Mid penury's bare soil and bitter gale;
He felt each storm that on the mountain blows,
Nor ever knew the shelter of the vale.
By genius in her native vigour nurst,
On nature with impassion'd look he gaz'd;
Then through the cloud of adverse fortune burst
Indignant, and in light unborrow'd blaz'd.
Scotia! from rude affliction shield thy bard;
His heaven-taught numbers Fame herself will guard.'

"I have been trying to add to the number of your subscribers, but find many of my acquaintance are already among them. I have only to add that, with every sentiment of esteem, and the most cordial good wishes,

"I am

"Your obedient humble servant,

J. Moore."]

* [The Rev. Dr. Lawrie was one of the Poet's earliest friends: the door of his manse was always open to him, a seat at his table was ever at his command, and he seems to have been fully sensible of the kindness with which he was treated. The letter, to which this of Burns was in answer, is dated 22d December, 1786, and evinces Dr. Lawrie's anxiety for his honest fame:—

Dear Sir,—I last week received a letter from Dr. Blacklock, in which he expresses a desire of seeing you. I write this to you, that you may lose no time in waiting upon him, should you not yet have seen him. "I rejoice to hear, from all corners, of your rising fame, and I wish and expect it may tower still higher by the new publication. But, as a

tude in neglecting so long to answer it. I will not trouble you with any account, by way of apology, of my hurried life and distracted attention: do me the justice to believe that my delay by no means proceeded from want of respect. I feel, and ever shall feel for you, the mingled sentiments of esteem for a friend, and reverence for a father.

I thank you, Sir, with all my soul for your friendly hints, though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but, in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Novelty may attract the attention of mankind awhile; to it I owe my present eclat; but I see the time not far distant when the popular tide, which has borne me to a height of which I am, perhaps, unworthy, shall recede with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectation of modesty; I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my intellectual powers before I came here; I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, anything to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed, early years.

In Dr. Blacklock, whom I see very often, I have found what I would have expected in our friend, a clear head and an excellent heart.

By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edinburgh must be placed to the account of Miss Lawrie and her piano-forte. I cannot help repeating to you and Mrs. Lawrie a compliment that Mr. Mackenzie, the celebrated "Man of Feeling," paid to Miss Lawrie, the other night, at the concert. I had come in at the interlude, and sat down by him till I saw Miss Lawrie in a seat not very distant, and went up to pay my respects to her. On my return to Mr. Mackenzie, he asked me who she was; I told him 'twas the daughter of a reverend friend of mine in the west country. He returned, there was something very striking, to his idea, in her appearance. On my desiring to know what it was, he was pleased to say, "She has a great deal of the elegance of a well-bred lady about her, with all the sweet simplicity of a country girl."

My compliments to all the happy inmates of St. Margaret's.

R. B.

No. XLII.

TO Dr. MOORE

Edinburgh, 15th February, 1787.

Sir:

Pardon my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me, in your kind notice of me, January 23d. Not many months ago I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast any thing higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment: but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see, with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honour Miss Williams has done me, please, Sir, return her in my name my most grateful thanks. I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her poems, which for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore; there are, I think, two characteristic features in her poetry—the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous, sombre tenderness of "time-settled sorrow."

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.*

R. B.

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friend, I warn you to prepare to meet with your share of detraction and envy—a train that always accompanies great men. For your comfort I am in great hopes that the number of your friends and admirers will increase, and that you have some chance of ministerial, or even royal, patronage. Now, my friend, such rapid success is very uncommon, and do you think yourself in no danger of suffering by applause and a full purse? Remember Solomon's advice, which he spoke from experience, 'stronger is he that conquers,' &c. Keep fast hold of your rural simplicity and purity, like Telemachus, by Mentor's aid in Calypso's isle, or even in that of Cyprus. I hope you have also Minerva with you. I need not tell you how much a modest diffidence and invincible temperance adorn the most shining talents, and elevate the mind, and exalt and refine the imagination even of a poet.

"I hope you will not imagine I speak from suspicion or evil report. I assure you I speak from love and good report, and good opinion, and a strong desire to see you shine as much in the sunshine as you have done in the shade; and in the practice as you do in the theory of virtue. This is my prayer in return for your elegant composition in verse. All here join in compliments and good wishes for your further prosperity."

* [The answer of Moore is characteristic of the man: the glimpse which it gives of the household in which the heroic Sir John Moore was born and bred will be acceptable to the world.

"*Clifford-street, 28th February, 1787.*

"Dear Sir:—Your letter of the 15th gave me a great deal of pleasure. It is not surprising that you improve in

No. XLIII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.

Edinburgh, Feb. 24, 1787.

My honoured Friend:—

I will soon be with you now, in guid black prent;—in a week or ten days at farthest. I am obliged, against my own wish, to print subscribers' names; so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription bills, they must be sent in to Creech directly. I am getting my phiz done by an eminent engraver, and, if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book, looking, like all other *fools*, to my title page.*

R. B.

No. XLIV.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

Edinburgh, February, 1787.

My Lord:

I wanted to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a "human face divine." The enclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with any thing of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude; I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, there is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship, by the honest throe of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition. I owe much to your lordship: and, what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust I have a heart as independent as your lordship's, than which I can say nothing more; and I would not be beholden to favours that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character, are flattering to my pride; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment, where I was under the patronage of one of the much favoured sons of fortune.

Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country; allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's highly indebted,
And ever grateful humble servant,

R. B.†

No. XLV.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

[*Edinburgh, February,* 1787.]

My Lord:

The honour your lordship has done me, by your notice and advice in yours of the 1st instant, I shall ever gratefully remember:—

> "Praise from thy lips 'tis mine with joy to boast,
> They best can give it who deserve it most."

Your lordship touches the darling chord of my heart, when you advise me to fire my muse at Scottish story and Scottish scenes. I wish for nothing more than to make a leisurely pilgrimage through my native country; to sit and muse on those once hard contested fields, where

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correctness and taste, considering where you have been for some time past. And I dare swear there is no danger of your admitting any polish which might weaken the vigour of your native powers.

"I am glad to perceive that you disdain the nauseous affectation of decrying your own merit as a poet, an affectation which is displayed with most ostentation by those who have the greatest share of self-conceit, and which only adds undeceiving falsehood to disgusting vanity. For you to deny the merit of your poems would be arraigning the fixed opinion of the public.

"As the new edition of my 'View of Society' is not yet ready, I have sent you the former edition, which I beg you will accept as a small mark of my esteem. It is sent by sea to the care of Mr. Creech, and along with these four volumes for yourself, I have also sent my 'Medical Sketches,' in one volume, for my friend Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop: this you will be so obliging as to transmit, or, if you chance to pass soon by Dunlop, to give to her.

"I am happy to hear that your subscription is so ample, and shall rejoice at every piece of good fortune that befalls you. For you are a very great favourite in my family; and this is a higher compliment than perhaps you are aware of. It includes almost all the professions, and of course is a proof that your writings are adapted to various tastes and situations. My youngest son, who is at Winchester school, writes to me that he is translating some stanzas of your 'Hallowe'en' into Latin verse, for the benefit of his comrades.

"This union of taste partly proceeds, no doubt, from the cement of Scottish partiality with which they are all somewhat tinctured. Even *your translator*, who left Scotland too early in life for recollection, is not without it.

* * * * * *

I remain, with great sincerity,
Your obedient servant,
J. Moore."]

* [The original picture, from which Beugo engraved the portrait to which the Poet alludes, was painted by the now venerable Nasmyth—the eldest of living British artists. It is of the cabinet size, and, though deficient in that look of inspiration which belonged peculiarly to Burns, is regarded by all the North as a good likeness. The engraving by Beugo has a more melancholy air, and is of a swarthier hue: this change was made by the engraver, who caused the Poet to sit to him, and finished the copper from his face, in preference to working from the picture. This painting passed into the hands of Mrs. Burns, after the death of Alexander Cunningham: it is now in the possession of the Poet's son, Captain William Burns, in India.]

† [The Earl of Glencairn seems to have refused, from motives of delicacy, the request of the Poet; and the Poet, perhaps stung by the refusal, destroyed his own copy of the verses, for they have been sought for in vain.]

Caledonia, rejoicing, saw her bloody lion borne through broken ranks to victory and fame; and, catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless names in song. But, my lord, in the midst of these enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry, moral-looking phantom strides across my imagination, and pronounces these emphatic words:—

"I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. Friend, I do not come to open the ill-closed wounds of your follies and misfortunes, merely to give you pain: I wish through these wounds to imprint a lasting lesson on your heart. I will not mention how many of my salutary advices you have despised: I have given you line upon line and precept upon precept; and while I was chalking out to you the straight way to wealth and character, with audacious effrontery you have zigzagged across the path, contemning me to my face: you know the consequences. It is not yet three months since home was so hot for you that you were on the wing for the western shore of the Atlantic, not to make a fortune, but to hide your misfortune.

"Now that your dear-loved Scotia puts it in your power to return to the situation of your forefathers, will you follow these will-o'-wisp meteors of fancy and whim, till they bring you once more to the brink of ruin? I grant that the utmost ground you can occupy is but half a step from the veriest poverty; but still it is half a step from it. If all that I can urge be ineffectual, let her who seldom calls to you in vain, let the call of pride prevail with you.—You know how you feel at the iron gripe of ruthless oppression: you know how you bear the galling sneer of contumelious greatness. I hold you out the conveniences, the comforts of life, independence, and character, on the one hand; I tender you civility, dependence, and wretchedness, on the other. I will not insult your understanding by bidding you make a choice."*

This, my lord, is unanswerable. I must return to my humble station, and woo my rustic muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail.—Still, my lord, while the drops of life warm my heart, gratitude to that dear loved country in which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those her distinguished sons who have honoured me so much with their patronage and approbation, shall, while stealing through my humble shades, ever distend my bosom, and at times, as now, draw forth the swelling tear.†

R. B.

* [Copied from the Bee, vol. ii., p. 319, and compared with the author's MSS.—CURRIE.]

† [The Earl of Buchan was one of the most economical of patrons; lest the object of his kindness might chance to feel too heavily the debt of obligation, he did not hesitate to allow a painter to present him with a picture, or a poet with a poem. He advised Burns to make a pilgrimage to the scenes of Scotland's battles, in the hope, perhaps, that Ancrammoor would be immortalized in song, and the name of the "Commendator of Dryburgh" included in the strain.]

No. XLVI.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

Edinburgh, March 8th, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

YOUR'S came safe, and I am as usual much indebted to your goodness. — Poor Captain M.[ontgomery] is cast. Yesterday it was tried whether the husband could proceed against the unfortunate lover without first divorcing his wife, and their Gravities on the Bench were unanimously of opinion that Maxwell may prosecute for damages directly, and need not divorce his wife at all if he pleases; and Maxwell is immediately, before the Lord Ordinary, to prove, what I dare say will not be denied, the Crim. Con.—then their Lordships will modify the damages, which I suppose will be pretty heavy, as their Wisdoms have expressed great abhorrence of my gallant Right Worshipful Brother's conduct.

O, all ye powers of love unfortunate, and friendless woe, pour the balm of sympathizing pity on the grief-torn, tender heart of the hapless Fair One!

My two songs on Miss W. Alexander and Miss P. Kennedy were likewise tried yesterday by a jury of literati, and found defamatory libels against the fastidious powers of Poesy and Taste; and the author forbidden to print them under pain of forfeiture of character. I cannot help almost shedding a tear to the memory of two songs that had cost me some pains, and that I valued a good deal, but I must submit.

My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.—

My poor unfortunate Songs come again across my memory. D—n the pedant, frigid soul of Criticism for ever and ever!

I am ever,
Dear Sir,
Your obliged
ROBERT BURNS.

[The above interesting letter was communicated to the Editor of the present edition, by John Hamilton, Esq., the "*wee curlie John* ——" of Burns's Poetical Dedication to his friend and patron Gavin Hamilton, Esq. It will be perused with interest by all admirers of the great Scottish Bard. The Songs so feelingly alluded to were "The Bonny Lass o' Ballochmyle," and "The Banks o' Bonny Doon"—two of the finest lyrics in the language. They were not long in making their appearance. See pp. 357 and 409.—J. C.]

No. XLVII.

TO Mr. JAMES CANDLISH.*

Edinburgh, March 21, 1787.

My ever dear old Acquaintance:

I was equally surprised and pleased at your letter, though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old, and once dear, connexions. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *all that.* I thought of it, and thought of it, and, by my soul, I could not; and, lest you should mistake the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit, though, that the strength of your logic scares me: the truth is I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have shown me one thing which was to be demonstrated: that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinosa trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I am still, in the Apostle Paul's phrase, "The old man with his deeds," as when we were sporting about the "Lady Thorn." I shall be four weeks here yet at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you; welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

R. B.

No. XLVIII.

TO Mr. WILLIAM DUNBAR.

Lawn-Market, Monday Morning, [*March,* 1787.]

Dear Sir:

In justice to Spenser, I must acknowledge that there is scarcely a poet in the language could have been a more agreeable present to me; and in justice to you, allow me to say, Sir, that I have not met with a man in Edinburgh to whom I would so willingly have been indebted for the gift. The tattered rhymes I herewith present you, and the handsome volumes of Spenser for which I am so much indebted to your goodness, may perhaps be not in proportion to one another; but be that as it may, my gift, though far less valuable, is as sincere a mark of esteem as yours.

The time is approaching when I shall return to my shades; and I am afraid my numerous Edinburgh friendships are of so tender a construction that they will not bear carriage with me. Yours is one of the few that I could wish of a more robust constitution. It is indeed very probable that when I leave this city, we part never more to meet in this sublunary sphere; but I have a strong fancy that in some future eccentric planet, the comet of happier systems than any with which astronomy is yet acquainted, you and I, among the harum scarum sons of imagination and whim, with a hearty shake of a hand, a metaphor and a laugh, shall recognise old acquaintance:

Where wit may sparkle all its rays,
Uncurst with caution's fears;
That pleasure, basking in the blaze,
Rejoice for endless years.

I have the honour to be, with the warmest sincerity, dear Sir, &c. R. B.

[This gentleman was the subject of the Poet's song entitled "Rattling, Roaring. Willie." He was a writer to the Signet in Edinburgh. The letter was first published in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the Poet's Works, and was communicated by Mr. P. Buchan, of Aberdeen.]

No. XLIX.

TO ———.

ON FERGUSSON'S HEAD-STONE.

Edinburgh, March, 1787.

My dear Sir:

You may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish, ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say thank you; but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the bye, there is nothing in the whole frame of man which seems to be so unaccountable as that thing called conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use; but at the beginning of the business, his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion as the infant frosts of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervour of the rising sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly, in the very vortex of our

* [The person to whom this letter is addressed—at that time a student of physic in the University of Glasgow, was a good scholar, something of a poet, and much of a controversialist. He was, it is believed, a native of the province of Galloway—was well acquainted with the poetry of John Lowe, author of "Mary's Dream," and furnished a copy of the Galwegian bard's song of "Pompey's Ghost," at the request of Burns, for the Musical Museum. He was one of the very earliest of the Poet's companions, and one of the cleverest; nor was he unsuccessful in the world.]

horrors, up starts conscience, and harrows us with the feelings of the damned.

I have enclosed you, by way of expiation, some verse and prose, that, if they merit a place in your truly entertaining miscellany, you are welcome to. The prose extract is literally as Mr. Sprott sent it me.

The inscription on the stone is as follows:—

"HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET,

"Born, September 5th, 1751—Died, October 16th, 1774.

"No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
'No storied urn nor animated bust;'
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust."

On the other side of the stone is as follows:—

"By special grant of the managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."

Session-house within the Kirk of Canongate, the twenty-second day of February, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven years.

Sederunt of the Managers of the Kirk and Kirk Yard funds of Canongate.

Which day, the treasurer to the said funds produced a letter from Mr. Robert Burns, of date the 6th current, which was read and appointed to be engrossed in their sederunt book, and of which letter the tenor follows:—

"To the honourable baillies of Canongate, Edinburgh.—Gentlemen, I am sorry to be told that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose talents for ages to come will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

"Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish song, when they wish to shed a tear over the 'narrow house' of the bard who is no more, is surely a tribute due to Fergusson's memory: a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying.

"I petition you then, gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame. I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your very humble servant (*sic subscribitur*),

ROBERT BURNS.

Thereafter the said managers, in consideration of the laudable and disinterested motion of Mr. Burns, and the propriety of his request, did, and hereby do, unanimously grant power and liberty to the said Robert Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of the said Robert Fergusson, and to keep up and preserve the same to his memory in all time coming.* Extracted forth of the records of the managers, by

WILLIAM SPROTT, Clerk.

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* [From the sinking of the ground of the neighbouring graves, the head-stone placed by Burns over Fergusson was thrown from its balance; this was observed soon after the death of the Bard of Ayr, by the Esculapian Club of Edinburgh, who, animated by that pious zeal for departed merit which had before led them to prevent some other sepulchral monuments from going to ruin, re-fixed the original stone, and added some iron work, with an additional inscription to the memory of Burns. The poetical part of it is taken, almost verbatim, from the Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson:—

Dignum laude verum Musa vetat mori.
Lo! Genius, proudly, while to Fame she turns,
Twines CURRIE'S laurels with the wreath of BURNS.

ROSCOE.

To the Memory of

ROBERT BURNS, THE AYR-SHIRE BARD;

WHO WAS BORN AT DOONSIDE,
On the 25th of January, 1759;

AND DIED AT DUMFRIES,
On the 22nd of July, 1796.

O ROBERT BURNS! the Man, the Brother!
And art thou gone—and gone for ever!
And hast thou cross'd that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound!
Like thee, where shall we find another,
The world around!

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye Great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the sweetest Poet's fate,
E'er liv'd on earth.

To have raised one solid monument of masonry to both, working Fergusson's head-stone into one side of the structure, and placing the Burns inscription on the other, would perhaps have been more judicious.—See Letter to Mr. Peter Hill, dated Feb. 5th, 1792, relative to this monument.

On the subject of Fergusson's head-stone, we find the following letter in Dr. Currie's edition of the Poet's works:—

March 8th, 1787.

I AM truly happy to know you have found a friend in * * * *; his patronage of you does him great honour. He is truly a good man; by far the best I ever knew, or, perhaps, ever shall know, in this world. But I must not speak all I think of him, lest I should be thought partial.

So you have obtained liberty from the magistrates to erect a stone over Fergusson's grave? I do not doubt it; such things have been, as Shakspeare says, "in the olden time;"

"The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,
He ask'd for bread, and he receiv'd a stone."

It is, I believe, upon poor Butler's tomb that this is written. But how many brothers of Parnassus, as well as poor Butler and poor Fergusson, have ask'd for bread, and been served with the same sauce!

The magistrates *gave you liberty*, did they? Oh, generous magistrates! * * * *, celebrated over the three kingdoms for his public spirit, gives a poor poet liberty to raise a tomb to a poor poet's memory! most generous! * * * *, once upon a time, gave that same poet the mighty sum of eighteen pence for a copy of his works. But then it must be considered that the poet was at that time absolutely starving, and besought his aid with all the earnestness of hunger. And over and above he received a * * * *, worth at least, one third of the value, in exchange; but which, I believe, the poet afterwards very ungratefully expunged.

Next week I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in Edinburgh; and, as my stay will be for eight or ten days, I wish you or * * * * would take a snug, well-aired bedroom for me, where I may have the pleasure of seeing you over a morning cup of tea. But by all accounts it will be a matter of some difficulty to see you at all, unless your company is bespoke a week before hand. There is a great rumour here concerning your great intimacy with the Duchess of

No. L.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, March 22d, 1787.

Madam:

I READ your letter with watery eyes. A little, very little while ago, I had scarce a friend but the stubborn pride of my own bosom; now I am distinguished, patronized, befriended by you. Your friendly advices—I will not give them the cold name of criticisms, I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed. I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here, but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honour of giving me his strictures: his hints with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future views and prospects; there I can give you no light. It is all

> "Dark as was Chaos ere the infant sun
> Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
> Athwart the gloom profound."

The appellation of a Scottish bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes and Scottish story are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which heaven knows I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts: I have dallied long enough with life; 'tis time to be in earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care for: and some other bosom ties perhaps equally tender. Where the individual only suffers by the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, indolence, or folly, he may not be excusable; nay shining abilities, and some of the nobler virtues, may half sanctify a heedless character; but where God and nature have entrusted the welfare of others to his care; where the trust is sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to reflection, whom these connexions will not rouse to exertion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and three hundred pounds by my authorship!* with that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to have any intention, to return to my old acquaintance, the plough, and, if I can meet with a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer. I do not intend to give up poetry; being bred to labour, secures me independence, and the muses are my chief, sometimes have been my only, enjoyment. If my practice second my resolution, I shall have principally at heart the serious business of life; but while following my plough, or building up my shocks, I shall cast a leisure glance to that dear, that only feature of my character, which gave me the notice of my country, and the patronage of a Wallace.

Thus, honoured Madam, I have given you the bard, his situation, and his views, native as they are in his own bosom.

R. B.

No. LI.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, 15th April, 1787.

Madam:

THERE is an affectation of gratitude which I dislike. The periods of Johnson and the pauses of Sterne may hide a selfish heart. For my part, Madam, I trust I have too much pride for servility, and too little prudence for selfishness. I have this moment broken open your letter, but

> "Rude am I in speech,
> And therefore little can I grace my cause
> In speaking for myself—"

———, and other ladies of distinction. I am really told that

"Cards to invite fly by thousands each night;"

and if you had one, I suppose there would also be "bribes to your old secretary." It seems you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, and avoid, if possible, the fate of poor Fergusson, * * * * *. *Quærenda pecunia primum est, virtus post nummos,* is a good maxim to thrive by: you seemed to despise it while in this part of the country, but probably some philosopher in Edinburgh has taught you better sense.

Pray are you yet engraving as well as printing—are you yet seized

> "With itch of picture in the front,
> With bays and wicked rhyme upon't?"

But I must give up this trifling, and attend to matters that more concern myself; so, as the Aberdeen wit says, "*Adieu, dryly;* we sal drink phan we meet."

"The above extract," says Dr. Currie, "is from a letter of one of the ablest of our Poet's correspondents, which contains some interesting anecdotes of Fergusson. The writer is mistaken in supposing the magistrates of Edinburgh had any share in the transaction respecting the monument erected for Fergusson by our Bard; this, it is evident, passed between Burns and the Kirk Session of the Canongate. Neither at Edinburgh, nor any where else, do magistrates usually trouble themselves to inquire how the house of a poor poet is furnished, or how his grave is adorned."

See additional letter on this subject, dated September, 1789.]

* [It has not hitherto been stated accurately how much the Poet made by the subscription copy of his poems: the clear profit has indeed been calculated at seven hundred pounds; but such calculations can be at the best but lucky guesses, in the absence of a correct subscription-paper. Some put down their names for ten copies and took but one, while others subscribed for one and paid a guinea.]

so I shall not trouble you with any fine speeches and hunted figures. I shall just lay my hand on my heart and say, I hope I shall ever have the truest, the warmest, sense of your goodness.

I come abroad in print, for certain on Wednesday. Your orders I shall punctually attend to; only, by the way, I must tell you that I was paid before for Dr. Moore's and Miss Williams' copies, through the medium of Commissioner Cochrane in this place, but that we can settle when I have the honour of waiting on you.

Dr. Smith* was just gone to London the morning before I received your letter to him.

R. B.

No. LII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Edinburgh, 23d. April, 1787.

I RECEIVED the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill skilled in beating the coverts of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank you, Sir, for the honour you have done me; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book is what I have in common with the world; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author's friendly esteem is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight, and, after a few pilgrimages over some of the classic ground of Caledonia, Cowden Knowes, Banks of Yarrow, Tweed, &c., I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavour to return her poetic compliment in kind.

R. B.

[The answer of Dr. Moore was as follows:—

"*Clifford Street, May* 23, 1787.

"DEAR SIR—I had the pleasure of your letter by Mr. Creech, and soon after he sent me the new edition of your poems. You seem to think it incumbent on you to send to each subscriber a number of copies proportionate to his subscription money, but you may depend upon it, few subscribers expect more than one copy, whatever they subscribed; I must inform you, however, that I took twelve copies for those subscribers, for whose money you were so accurate as to send me a receipt, and Lord Eglinton told me he had sent for six copies for himself, as he wished to give five of them as presents.

"Some of the poems you have added in this last edition are very beautiful, particularly the 'Winter Night,' the 'Address to Edinburgh,' 'Green grow the Rashes,' and the two songs immediately following—the latter of which is exquisite. By the way, I imagine, you have a peculiar talent for such compositions, which you ought to indulge. No kind of poetry demands more delicacy or higher polishing. Horace is more admired on account of his Odes than all his other writings. But nothing now added is equal to your "Vision" and "Cotter's Saturday Night." In these are united fine imagery, natural and pathetic description, with sublimity of language and thought. It is evident that you already possess a great variety of expression and command of the English language; you ought, therefore, to deal more sparingly, for the future, in the provincial dialect—why should you, by using *that*, limit the number of your admirers to those who understand the Scottish, when you can extend it to all persons of taste who understand the English language? In my opinion you should plan some larger work than any you have as yet attempted. I mean, reflect upon some proper subject, and arrange the plan in your mind, without beginning to execute any part of it till you have studied most of the best English poets, and read a little more of history. The Greek and Roman stories you can read in some abridgment, and soon become master of the most brilliant facts, which must highly delight a poetical mind. You *should* also, and very soon *may*, become master of the heathen mythology, to which there are everlasting allusions in all the poets, and which in itself is charmingly fanciful. What will require to be studied with more attention is modern history; that is, the history of France and Great Britain, from the beginning of Henry the Seventh's reign. I know very well you have a mind capable of attaining knowledge by a shorter process than is commonly used, and I am certain you are capable of making a better use of it, when attained, than is generally done.

I beg you will not give yourself the trouble of writing to me when it is inconvenient, and make no apology when you do write for having postponed it—be assured of this, however, that I shall always be happy to hear from you. I

* [Adam Smith, the distinguished author of "The Wealth of Nations," &c.]

think my friend Mr. —— told me that you had some poems in manuscript by you, of a satirical and humorous nature (in which, by the way, I think you very strong), which your prudent friends prevailed on you to omit, particularly one called 'Somebody's Confession:' if you will entrust me with a sight of any of these, I will pawn my word to give no copies, and will be obliged to you for a perusal of them.

I understand you intend to take a farm, and make the useful and respectable business of husbandry your chief occupation: this I hope will not prevent your making occasional addresses to the nine ladies who have shown you such favour, one of whom visited you in the 'auld clay biggin.' Virgil, before you, proved to the world that there is nothing in the business of husbandry inimical to poetry; and I sincerely hope that you may afford an example of a good poet being a successful farmer. I fear it will not be in my power to visit Scotland this season; when I do, I'll endeavour to find you out, for I heartily wish to see and converse with you. If ever your occasions call you to this place, I make no doubt of your paying me a visit, and you may depend on a very cordial welcome from this family. I am, dear Sir, your friend and obedient servant,

J. Moore."]

No. LIII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, 30th April, 1787.

——Your criticisms, Madam, I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel. Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being, either in prose or verse.

I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, critics, &c., as all these respective gentry do by my bardship. I know what I may expect from the world, by and bye—illiberal abuse, and perhaps contemptuous neglect.

I am happy, Madam, that some of my own favourite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my "Dream,"* which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope in four weeks, or less, to have the honour of appearing, at Dunlop, in its defence in person.

R. B.

* [The well-known poem, beginning, "Guid morning to your majesty." (See p. 254.) Mrs. Dunlop had probably recommended its being omitted in the second edition, on the score of prudence.]

No. LIV.

TO THE Rev. Dr. HUGH BLAIR.

Lawn-market, Edinburgh, 3rd May, 1787.

Reverend & much-respected Sir:

I leave Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship you have shown me. I often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation; drawn forth from the veriest shades of life to the glare of remark; and honoured by the notice of those illustrious names of my country whose works, while they are applauded to the end of time, will ever instruct and mend the heart. However the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, and honour me with the acquaintance of the permanent lights of genius and literature, those who are truly benefactors of the immortal nature of man, I knew very well that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over; I have made up my mind that abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters.

I have sent you a proof impression of Beugo's work† for me, done on Indian paper, as a trifling but sincere testimony with what heart-warm gratitude I am, &c.

R. B.

[The answer of Blair to this letter contains a full refutation of all those who asserted that the Poet's life in Edinburgh was wild and irregular:—

"*Argyle-square, Edinburgh, 4th May,* 1787.

"Dear Sir:—I was favoured this forenoon with your very obliging letter, together with an impression of your portrait, for which I return you my best thanks. The success you have met with I do not think was beyond your merits; and if I have had any small hand in contributing to it, it gives me great pleasure. I know no way in which literary persons who are advanced in years can do more service to the world than in forwarding the efforts of rising genius, or bringing forth unknown merit from obscurity. I was the first person who brought out to the notice of the world the poems of Ossian; first, by the 'Fragments of ancient Poetry,' which I published, and afterwards, by my setting on foot the undertaking for collecting and publishing the 'Works of Ossian;' and I have always considered this as a meritorious action of my life.

"Your situation, as you say, was indeed very singular: and in being brought out, all at once,

† The portrait of the Poet after Nasmyth.

from the shades of deepest privacy to so great a share of public notice and observation, you had to stand a severe trial. I am happy that you have stood it so well; and, as far as I have known or heard, though in the midst of many temptations, without reproach to your character and behaviour.

"You are now, I presume, to retire to a more private walk of life; and I trust will conduct yourself there with industry, prudence, and honour. You have laid the foundation for just public esteem. In the midst of those employments, which your situation will render proper, you will not, I hope, neglect to promote that esteem, by cultivating your genius, and attending to such productions of it as may raise your character still higher. At the same time be not in too great a haste to come forward. Take time and leisure to improve and mature your talents. For on any second production, you give the world, your fate, as a poet, will very much depend. There is no doubt a gloss of novelty, which time wears off. As you very properly hint yourself, you are not to be surprised if in your rural retreat you do not find yourself surrounded with that glare of notice and applause which here shone upon you. No man can be a good poet without being somewhat of a philosopher. He must lay his account that any one, who exposes himself to public observation, will occasionally meet with the attacks of illiberal censure, which it is always best to overlook and despise. He will be inclined sometimes to court retreat, and to disappear from public view. He will not affect to shine always; that he may at proper seasons come forth with more advantage and energy. He will not think himself neglected if he be not always praised. I have taken the liberty, you see, of an old man to give advice and make reflections, which your own good sense will I dare say render unnecessary.

When you return, if you come this way, I will be happy to see you, and to know concerning your future plans of life. You will find me by the 22nd of this month, not in my house in Argyle-square, but at a country-house at Restalrig, about a mile east from Edinburgh, near the Musselburgh-road. Wishing you all success and prosperity, I am, with real regard and esteem,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"HUGH BLAIR."]

No LV.

TO MR. PATISON,

BOOKSELLER, PAISLEY.

Berry-well, near Dunse, May 11th, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I AM sorry I was out of Edinburgh, making a slight pilgrimage to the classic scenes of this country, when I was favoured with yours of the 11th instant, enclosing an order of the Paisley banking company on the Royal bank, for twenty-two pounds seven shillings sterling, payment in full, after carriage deducted, for ninety copies of my book I sent you. According to your motions, I see you will have left Scotland before this reaches you, otherwise I would send you "Holy Willie" with all my heart. I was so hurried that I absolutely forgot several things I ought to have minded, among the rest, sending books to Mr. Cowan; but any order of yours will be answered at Creech's shop. You will please remember that non-subscribers pay six shillings; this is Creech's profit; but those who have subscribed, though their names have been neglected in the printed list, which is very incorrect, they are supplied at the subscription price.

I was not at Glasgow, nor do I intend for London; and I think Mrs. Fame is very idle to tell so many lies on a poor Poet. When you or Mr. Cowan write for copies, if you should want any, direct to Mr. Hill,* at Mr. Creech's shop, and I write to Mr. Hill by this post, to answer either of your orders. Hill is Mr. Creech's first clerk, and Creech himself is presently in London. I suppose I shall have the pleasure, against your return to Paisley, of assuring you how much I am,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged humble Servant,

R. B.†

No. LVI.

TO MR. W. NICOL,

MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Carlisle, June 1, 1787.

KIND, HONEST-HEARTED WILLIE:

I'M sitten down here, after seven and forty miles ridin', e'en as forjesket and forniaw'd as a forfoughten cock, to gie you some notion o' my land lowper-like stravaguin sin the sorrowfu'

* [Mr. Peter Hill, afterwards in business for himself as a bookseller, and honoured by the poet's correspondence. Reared with Mr. Creech, he was in his turn master to Mr. Constable. He died at an advanced age, in 1836.]

† [This letter first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of Burns's works, and is valuable inasmuch as it shews the number of the Poet's works which were subscribed for in Paisley. The original MS. is in the hands of Charles Hutcheson, Esq. of Glasgow.]

hour that I sheuk hands and parted wi' auld Reekie.

My auld, ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchyall'd up hill and down brae, in Scotland and England, as teugh and birnie as a vera devil wi' me. * It's true, she's as poor's a sang-maker and as hard's a kirk, and tipper-taipers when she taks the gate, first like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwae, or a hen on a het girdle; but she's a yauld, poutherie girran for a' that, and has a stomack like Willie Stalker's meere that wad hae disgeested tumbler-wheels, for she'll whip me aff her five stimparts o' the best aits at a down-sittin and ne'er fash her thumb.—When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her crucks and cramps, are fairly soupl'd, she beets to, beets to, and aye the hindmost hour the tightest. I could wager her price to a thretty pennies, that for twa or three wooks ridin' at fifty mile a day, the deil-sticket a five gallopers acqueesh Clyde and Whithorn could cast saut on her tail.

I hae dander'd owre a' the kintra frae Dumbar to Selcraig, and hae foregather'd wi' mony a guid fallow, and monie a weelfar'd hizzie.—I met wi' twa dink quines in particlar, ane o' them a sonsie, fine, fodgel lass, baith braw and bonnie; the tither was a clean-shankit, straught, tight, weelfar'd winch, as blythe's a lintwhite on a flowerie thorn, and as sweet and modest's a new blawn plumrose in a hazle shaw. They were baith bred to mainers by the beuk, and onie ane o' them had as muckle smeddum and rumblegumption as the half o' some presbytries that you and I baith ken. They play'd me sic a deevil o' a shavie that I daur say, if my harigals were turn'd out, ye wad see twa nicks i' the heart o' me like the mark o' a kail-whittle in a castock.

I was gaun to write you a lang pystle, but, Gude forgie me, I gat mysel sae noutouriously bitchify'd the day, after kail-time, that I can hardly stoiter but and ben.

My best respecks to the guidwife and a' our common friens, especiall Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank, and the honest guidman o' Jock's Lodge.

I'll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale.

Gude be wi' you, Willie! Amen!

R. B.†

* [This mare was the Poet's favourite, Jenny Geddes. She was named by him, says Cromek, after the old woman who, in her zeal against religious innovation, threw a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head, when he attempted, in 1637, to introduce the Scottish Liturgy.—"On Sunday, the twenty-third of July, the Dean of Edinburgh prepared to officiate in St. Giles's. The congregation continued quiet till the service began, when an old woman, impelled by sudden indignation, started up, and exclaiming aloud, 'Villain! dost thou say the mass at my lug?' threw the stool on which she had been sitting at the Dean's head. A wild uproar commenced that instant. The service was interrupted. The woman invaded the desk with execrations and outcries, and the Dean disengaged himself from his surplice to escape from her hands."]

† [This letter cannot be otherwise than obscure to many a reader; nor can we hope, by a mere explanation of the words individually, to let English light in upon northern darkness. The gentleman to whom it was addressed understood it well: he was of humble parentage, and, like our Poet, forced his way to distinction by his talents and his learning: having achieved eminence, he sat quiet for a time, and seemed to be satisfied with himself. His love for pleasant company, and lively sallies of humour or of wit, led him to indulge in the pleasures of the table, and carried him to an early grave. He died in 1797.—CUNNINGHAM.

["No man had ever more command of the ancient Doric dialect than Burns. He has left a curious testimony of his skill in the above letter—an attempt to read a sentence of which would break the teeth of most modern Scotchmen."—SIR WALTER SCOTT. It is written in the west-country dialect, and does not present any difficulty to a native.—MOTHERWELL.]

No. LVII.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

AT MILLER AND SMITH'S OFFICE, LINLITHGOW.

Mauchline, 11th June, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR:

I DATE this from Mauchline, where I arrived on Friday evening last. I slept at John Dow's, and called for my daughter; Mr. Hamilton and family; your mother, sister, and brother; my quondam Eliza, &c., all—all well. If any thing had been wanting to disgust me completely at Armour's family, their mean servile compliance would have done it. Give me a spirit like my favourite hero, Milton's Satan:

> "Hail, horrors! hail,
> Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
> Receive thy new possessor! one who brings
> A mind not to be chang'd by *place* or *time*!"

I cannot settle to my mind.—Farming—the only thing of which I know anything, and Heaven above knows but little do I understand even of that, I cannot, dare not risk on farms as they are. If I do not fix, I will go for Jamaica. Should I stay, in an unsettled state at home, I would only dissipate my little fortune, and ruin what I intend shall compensate my little ones for the stigma I have brought on their names.

I shall write you more at large soon; as this letter costs you no postage, if it be worth reading you cannot complain of your pennyworth.

I am ever,

My dear Sir,

Yours,

R. B.

[The above letter now appears for the first time in a complete edition of the Poet's works.]

No. LVIII.

TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL.

Mauchline, June 18, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I AM now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the

pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your grey-headed, reverend friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands, and his reception of my bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with Dumfries folks—Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember; and his wife, Gude forgie me! I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humour, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart: in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of anything generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, SATAN. 'Tis true, I have just now a little cash; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith; that noxious planet, so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon. —Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for, the walks of business; add to all, that thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with step-bewitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless Bard, till, pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have in life, I have felt along the lines, and, damn them, they are almost all of them of such frail contexture that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune; but from you, my ever dear Sir, I look with confidence for the Apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report," — the love which Solomon emphatically says "is strong as death." My compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and all the circle of our common friends.

P.S. I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.

R. B.

No. LIX.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH.

Edinburgh, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

IF once I were gone from this scene of hurry and dissipation, I promise myself the pleasure of that correspondence being renewed which has been so long broken. At present I have time for nothing. Dissipation and business engross every moment. I am engaged in assisting an honest Scotch enthusiast,* a friend of mine, who is an engraver, and has taken it into his head to publish a collection of all our songs set to music, of which the words and music are done by Scotsmen. This, you will easily guess, is an undertaking exactly to my taste. I have collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen, all the songs I could meet with. Pompey's Ghost, words and music, I beg from you immediately, to go into his second number—the first is already published. I shall shew you the first number when I see you in Glasgow, which will be in a fortnight or less. Do be so kind as to send me the song in a day or two: you cannot imagine how much it will oblige me.

Direct to me at Mr. W. Cruickshank's, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.†

R. B.

* Johnson, the publisher and proprietor of the Musical Museum.

† [The reply to the Poet's letter bears testimony to the taste and talents of one of Burns's early companions.

"Your kind letter came to hand, and I would have answered it sooner, had I not delayed, in expectation of finding some person who could enable me to comply with your request. Being myself unskilled in music as a science, I made an attempt to get the song you mentioned, set by some other hand; but as I could not accomplish this, I must send you the words without the music. Some of Edina's fair nymphs may perhaps be able to do you a piece of service which I would have done with the greatest pleasure had it been in my power. It is with the greatest sincerity I applaud your attempt to give the world a more correct and more elegant collection of Scottish songs than has hitherto appeared. They have been long and much admired, and yet perhaps no poetical compositions ever met with approbation more disproportioned to their merit. Many, from an affectation perhaps of a more than usual knowledge of ancient literature, extol, with the most extravagant praises, the pastoral productions of the Greek and Roman poets; and attempt to persuade us that in them alone is to be found that natural simplicity, and that tenderness of sentiment, which constitute the true excellence of that species of writing. For my own part, though I cannot altogether divest myself of partiality to the ancients, whose merit will cease only to be admired with the universal wreck of men and letters, yet I am persuaded that in many of the songs of our own nation, there are beauties which it would be vain to look for in the most admired poetical compositions of antiquity. They are the offspring of nature; they are expressed in the language of simplicity

No. LX.

TO WILLIAM NICOL, Esq.

Auchtertyre, Monday, June,* 1787.

My dear Sir:

I find myself very comfortable here, neither oppressed by ceremony, nor mortified by neglect. Lady Augusta is a most engaging woman, and very happy in her family, which makes one's out-goings and in-comings very agreeable. I called at Mr. Ramsay's of Auchtertyre † as I came up the country, and am so delighted with him that I shall certainly accept of his invitation to spend a day or two with him as I return. I leave this place on Wednesday or Thursday.

Make my kind compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank and Mrs. Nicol, if she is returned.

I am ever, dear Sir,

Your deeply indebted,—R. B.

[Burns was now on his first tour in the Highlands: he set out in no pleasant mood, for he scattered sharp epigrams and bitter lampoons on all and sundry as he travelled along. The verses on the window of the inn at Stirling—on Carron Foundry, and on Inverary, belong to this jaunt: nor had the witchery of beauty or the presence of learning any influence over his muse. The following complimentary verse is said to have been composed about this period—it is an epitaph on Nicol himself:—

Ye maggots feast on Willie's brain,
For few sic feasts ye've gotten;
And fix your claws on Willie's heart,
For de'il a bit o't 's rotten.]

No. LXI.

TO WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK,

ST. JAMES'S SQUARE, EDINBURGH.‡

Auchtertyre, Monday, June 1787.

I have nothing, my dear Sir, to write to you, but that I feel myself exceedingly comfortably situated in this good family: just notice enough to make me easy, but not to embarrass me. I was storm-staid two days at the foot of the Ochill-hills, with Mr. Tait of Herveyston and Mr. Johnston of Alva, but was so well pleased that I shall certainly spend a day on the banks of the Devon as I return. I leave this place I suppose on Wednesday, and shall devote a day to Mr. Ramsay at Auchtertyre, near Stirling: a man to whose worth I cannot do justice. My respectful kind compliments to Mrs. Cruikshank, and my dear little Jeanie, and, if you see Mr. Masterton, please remember me to him.

I am ever,

My dear Sir, &c.—R. B.

No. LXII.§

TO Miss ———.

1787.

My dear Countrywoman:

I am so impatient to show you that I am once more at peace with you that I send you the book I mentioned directly, rather than wait the uncertain time of seeing you. I am afraid I have mislaid or lost Collins' Poems, which I promised to Miss Irvin. If I can find them, I will forward them by you; if not, you must apologize for me.

I know you will laugh at it when I tell you that your piano and you together have played the deuce somehow about my heart. My breast has been widowed these many months, and I thought myself proof against the fascinating witchcraft; but I am afraid you will "feelingly convince me what I am." I say, I am afraid, because I am not sure what is the matter with me. I have one miserable bad symptom; when you whisper, or look kindly to another, it gives me a draught of damnation. I have a kind of wayward wish to be with you ten mi-

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and the love songs, breathing sentiments that are inspired by the most tender and exquisite feelings, are in unison with the human heart. There is no one in whose veins the smallest drop of Scottish blood circulates but must feel the most heartfelt pleasure when he reflects that those songs, which do such honour to both the genius and to the feelings of his countrymen; which, in simplicity of language, and in the sensibility that pervades them, have never been equalled by those of any nation; and which have been so much admired by foreigners, will continue to be sung with delight by both sexes, while Scots men and the Scots language remain.—If the collection is to be published by subscription, put down my name for a copy. My time this winter is very much employed—no less than ten hours a day. Expecting to see you soon, I am yours most sincerely.—James Candlish."]

* [The seat of Sir William Murray, Bart.—delightfully situated in Strathearn, two miles from Crieff. Sir W. and Lady Augusta Murray were the parents of Sir George Murray, at one time Secretary for the Colonies.]

† [Auchtertyre, on the Teith, near Stirling. Mr. Ramsay was an enthusiast in classical literature, somewhat after the manner of the Baron Bradwardine, joining to it a keen relish of the homely literature of his native country.]

‡ [William Cruikshank, one of the masters of the high school of Edinburgh, was kind and obliging, and, as his station required, a good scholar. At his house Burns resided in the latter part of 1787, and passed many pleasant evenings. The house was the uppermost floor of the building, marked No. 30 (then No. 2) in St. James's-square; Burns's apartment looked into the green inclosure behind the Register House. The "dear little Jeanie" of this letter was the "Rose-bud" of one of his sweetest poems: she was not only beautiful, but sang with feeling, and played on various musical instruments with such grace as called forth, on several occasions, the commendations of the Bard. The letter is chiefly valuable as a record of his friendships and of his line of march into the Highlands.

§ [The letter, dated June 30th, 1787, addressed to Mr. James Smith, Linlithgow, and forming No. LVIII. of the General Correspondence, in the former edition of Cunningham's Burns, is omitted here, as the whole of it is inserted in the LIFE, pp. 60 and 61, of the present edition.]

nutes by yourself, though what I would say Heaven above knows, for I am sure I know not. I have no formed design in all this; but just, in the nakedness of my heart, write you down a mere matter-of-fact story. You may perhaps give yourself airs of distance on this, and that will completely cure me; but I wish you would not: just let us meet, if you please, in the old beaten way of friendship.

I will not subscribe myself your humble servant, for that is a phrase, I think, at least fifty miles off from the heart; but I will conclude with sincerely wishing that the Great Protector of innocence may shield you from the barbed dart of calumny, and hand you by the covert snare of deceit.

R. B.

["This letter," says Cromek, in his MS. Memoranda, "appears to have been written during the year 1784, and was probably addressed to the Peggy mentioned in the Poet's common-place book."

There are reasons for doubting this, and, amongst others, the allusion to the piano, which instrument, we are told by Gilbert Burns, Robert did not hear played till autumn 1786, when he was spending an evening in the house of Dr. Lawrie, at Loudon. It seems more likely that this letter was addressed, in 1787, to the lady whom the poet alludes to in his letter to James Smith, [dated June 30th of that year] descriptive of his first Highland tour. See LIFE. p. 61.]

No. LXIII.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND.

Mossgiel, 7th July, 1787.

MY DEAR RICHMOND:

I AM all impatience to hear of your fate since the old confounder of right and wrong has turned you out of place, by his journey to answer his indictment at the bar of the other world. He will find the practice of the court so different from the practice in which he has for so many years been thoroughly hackneyed, that his friends, if he had any connections truly of that kind, which I rather doubt, may well tremble for his sake. His chicane, his left-handed wisdom, which stood so firmly by him, to such good purpose, here, like other accomplices in robbery and plunder, will, now the piratical business is blown, in all probability turn king's evidences, and then the devil's bagpiper will touch him off "Bundle and go!"

If he has left you any legacy, I beg your pardon for all this; if not, I know you will swear to every word I said about him.

I have lately been rambling over by Dumbarton and Inverary, and running a drunken race on the side of Loch Lomond with a wild Highlandman; his horse, which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather, zigzagged across before my old spavin'd hunter, whose name is Jenny Geddes, and down came the Highlandman, horse and all, and down came Jenny and my bardship; so I have got such a skinful of bruises and wounds that I shall be at least four weeks before I venture on my journey to Edinburgh.

Not one new thing under the sun has happened in Mauchline since you left it. I hope this will find you as comfortably situated as formerly, or, if Heaven pleases, more so; but, at all events, I trust you will let me know, of course, how matters stand with you, well or ill. 'Tis but poor consolation to tell the world when matters go wrong; but you know very well your connection and mine stands on a different footing.

I am ever, my dear friend, yours,

R. B.

No. LXIV.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.*

Mauchline, July, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR:

MY life, since I saw you last, has been one continued hurry; that savage hospitality which knocks a man down with strong liquors is the devil. I have a sore warfare in this world; the devil, the world, and the flesh, are three formidable foes. The first I generally try to fly from; the second, alas! generally flies from me; but the third is my plague, worse than the ten plagues of Egypt.

I have been looking over several farms in this country; one in particular, in Nithsdale, pleased me so well that, if my offer to the proprietor is accepted, I shall commence farmer at Whit-Sunday. If farming do not appear eligible, I shall have recourse to my other shift;† but this to a friend.

I set out for Edinburgh on Monday morning; how long I stay there is uncertain, but you will know so soon as I can inform you myself. However I determine, poesy must be laid aside for some time; my mind has been vitiated with idleness, and it will take a good deal of effort to habituate it to the routine of business.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

R. B.

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* [A short letter to Mr. Ainslie, dated *Arrachar*, June 28th, 1787, will be found in the LIFE, p. 60.]

† [The Excise.]

[The poet makes a similar complaint of the "savage hospitality" of his admirers to Mrs. Dunlop: he lived in days of hard drinking, when all glasses which were raised to the lips full were not set down till empty.—"Here I am," he says, in one of his letters, "sitting with an atmosphere of hypochondriac vapours about me, like the thickening fogs of an October morning. Job cursed his day, but I go farther; I curse my day and doubly curse my night: by night I get myself fou'; by night I sing merry songs; by night

'I moop wi' the servant hizzie;'

in short, by night, as Sir John Falstaff says, 'I am, as one may say, little better than one of the wicked.' To-day has been a day of sackcloth and ashes. The parliamentary powers of my mind have had a solemn meeting to consider on a bill of reform: I dread an opposition in the lower house, but I am determined to carry it through."]

No. LXV.

TO Dr. MOORE.

Mauchline, 2nd August, 1787.

Sir:

For some months past I have been rambling over the country, but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expense; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble,—I have, I say, like him turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and like him, too, frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the herald's office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

"My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood."

Gules, purpure, argent, &c., quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom.—I have met with few who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate.

At those years, I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot [idiotic] piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and, by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery.—This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look out in suspicious places; and, though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was The Vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear—

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave—"

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were The Life of Hannibal, and The History of Sir William Wallace. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c., used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was, like our catechism definition of infinitude, without bounds or limits. I formed several connexions with other younkers, who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were, perhaps, born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations, and one, whose heart, I am sure, not even the "Munny Begum" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of "The Twa Dogs." My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and, to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might, perhaps, have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom: she was a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass." In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her.—Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and, till within the last twelve months, have been my highest, enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commence-

ment of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here, but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!

It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps, the most ungainly awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the Spectator. These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakspeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, The Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener's Directory, Boyle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditations, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes.* My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of presbyterian country life; for though the will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings, by which I could enter the temple of fortune, were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargaining. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always, where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and, as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant.

I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and, I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice baptize these things by

* ["I wonder," says Gilbert Burns, "how Robert could attribute to our father that lasting resentment of his going to a dancing school against his will, and of which he was incapable. I believe the truth was that about this time he began to see the dangerous impetuosity of my brother's passions, as well as his not being amenable to counsel, which often irritated my father, and which, he would naturally think, a dancing-school was not likely to correct. But he was proud of Robert's genius, which he bestowed more expense on cultivating than on the rest of the family—and he was equally delighted with his warmth of heart and conversational powers. He had indeed that dislike of dancing-schools which Robert mentions; but so far overcame it during Robert's first month of attendance that he permitted the rest of the family that were fit for it to accompany him during the second month. Robert excelled in dancing, and was for some time distractedly fond of it."]

the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature: to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel

> "Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
> Herself a fairer flower——"

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far that, though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of the day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—Tristram Shandy and the Man of Feeling were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except "Winter, a dirge," the eldest of my printed pieces; "The Death of poor Mailie," "John Barleycorn," and songs first, second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the foremention ed school-business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important æra. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine), to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My * * * and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, the shop took fire and burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

I was obliged to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and to crown my distresses, a *belle fille*, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—"Depart from me, ye accursed!"

From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune.* He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood, taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill-fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him he had

* [The individual here alluded to was named Richard Brown. His mature life was an improvement upon his youth, and he died, in the enjoyment of general respect, within the last few years, at Greenock.]

been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding that he is at this time master of a large West-Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure, I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief, and the consequence was that, soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote the "Poet's Welcome."† My reading only increased while in this town by two stray volumes of Pamela, and one of Ferdinand Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

I entered on this farm with a full resolution, "come, go to, I will be wise!" I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and in short, in spite of the devil, and the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my "Holy Fair." I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, "The Lament." This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But, before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say that, *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves.—To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and, besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

> "Hungry ruin had me in the wind.'

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail;

† "Rob the Rhymer's Welcome to his Bastard Child."

as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—"The gloomy night is gathering fast," when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oublie moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je l'oublie!*

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to "catch" the characters and "the manners living as they rise." Whether I have profited, time will shew.*

* * * *

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. Her very elegant and friendly letter I cannot answer at present, as my presence is requisite in Edinburgh, and I set out to-morrow.

R. B.

No. LXVI.

TO Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE, Jun.

BERRYWELL, DUNSE.

Edinburgh, 23rd August, 1787.

"As I gaed up to Danse,
To warp a pickle yarn,
Robin, silly body,
He gat me wi' bairn."

From henceforth, My dear Sir, I am determined to set off with my letters like the periodical writers, viz., prefix a kind of text, quoted from some classic of undoubted authority, such as the author of the immortal piece of which my text is a part. What I have to say on my text is exhausted in chatter I wrote you the other day, before I had the pleasure of receiving yours from Inverleithing; and sure never was any thing more lucky, as I have but the time to write this, that Mr. Nicol on the opposite side of the table takes to correct a proof sheet of a thesis. They are gabbling Latin so loud that I cannot hear what my own soul is saying in my own skull, so must just give you a matter-of-fact sentence or two, and end, if time permit, with a verse *de rei generatione*.

To-morrow I leave Edinburgh in a chaise: Nicol thinks it more comfortable than horseback, to which I say Amen; so Jenny Geddes goes home to Ayr-shire, to use a phrase of my mother's, "wi' her finger in her mouth."

Now for a modest verse of classical authority:—

The cats like kitchen,
The dogs like broo;
The lasses like the lads weel,
And th' auld wives too.

CHORUS.

And we're a' noddin,
Nid, nid, noddin,
We're a noddin fou at e'en.†

If this does not please you, let me hear from you: if you write any time before the first of September, direct to Inverness, to be left at the post-office till called for; the next week at Aberdeen; the next at Edinburgh.

The sheet is done, and I shall just conclude with assuring you that I am, and ever with pride shall be, my dear Sir, yours, &c.

Robert Burns.

Call your boy what you think proper, only interject Burns. What do you say to a scripture name; for instance, Zimri Burns Ainslie, or Archetophel, &c. Look your Bible for these two heroes—if you do this, I will repay the compliment.

[The above humourous epistle from the Poet was originally inserted in Pickering's edition of the poetical works of Robert Burns. It is

* [The first intimation which the Poet gives of his intention to write an account of himself is contained in his letter to Robert Muir: that he might do it more at his leisure, he retired for a while to Mauchline, and in the scenes that formerly inspired him, composed this most valuable biography. —"I mentioned to you," he says, to an Edinburgh beauty, [Clarinda] "my letter to Dr. Moore, giving an account of my life: it is truth, every word of it; and will give you the just idea of a man whom you have honoured with your friendship. I am afraid you will hardly be able to make sense of so torn a piece." To the same lady, he says, on the same interesting subject, "I have been this morning taking a peep through, as Young finely says,

'The dark postern of time long elapsed.'

And you will easily guess it was a rueful prospect. What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple! what proportion in some parts! what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I knelt down before The Father of mercies, and said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!' I rose eased and strengthened. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man. The future, said I to myself, is still before me—there let me—

'On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man.'"]

† [See song commencing "Gude E'en to you Kimmer."]

extremely characteristic, and will be read with great interest by every admirer of the Poet. It is printed from the original MS. in the hand-writing of Burns.]

No. LXVII.

TO Mr. ROBERT MUIR.

Stirling, 26th August, 1787.

My dear Sir:

I intended to have written you from Edinburgh, and now write you from Stirling to make an excuse. Here am I, on my way to Inverness, with a truly original, but very worthy man, a Mr. Nicol, one of the masters of the High-school in Edinburgh. I left Auld Reekie yesterday morning, and have passed, besides by-excursions, Linlithgow, Borrowstouness, Falkirk, and here am I undoubtedly. This morning I knelt at the tomb of Sir John the Graham, the gallant friend of the immortal Wallace; and two hours ago I said a fervent prayer for old Caledonia over the hole in a blue whinstone, where Robert de Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn; and just now, from Stirling Castle, I have seen by the setting sun the glorious prospect of the windings of Forth through the rich carse of Stirling, and skirting the equally rich carse of Falkirk. The crops are very strong, but so very late that there is no harvest, except a ridge or two perhaps in ten miles, all the way I have travelled from Edinburgh.

I left Andrew Bruce* and family all well.—I will be at least three weeks in making my tour, as I shall return by the coast, and have many people to call for.

My best compliments to Charles, our dear kinsman and fellow saint; and Messrs. W. and H. Parkers. I hope Hughoc† is going on and prospering with God and Miss M'Causlin.

If I could think on any thing sprightly, I should let you hear every other post; but a dull, matter-of-fact business like this scrawl, the less and seldomer one writes, the better.

Among other matters-of-fact I shall add this that I am and ever shall be,

My dear Sir,

Your obliged,

R. B.‡

* [Of the North Bridge, Edinburgh.]

† [The Hughoc of poor Mailie.]

‡ [This is the first letter which the Poet wrote during his excursion northward with Nicol. No Scotsman will read without emotion what he says about Bannockburn: nor will those who are interested in his poetry fail to see that "Wee Hughoc," who figures in "Poor Mailie," is not forgotten; the Bard hopes he is prospering with God and Miss M'Causlin.]

No. LXVIII.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

Stirling, 28th August, 1787.

My dear Sir:

Here I am on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich, fertile carses of Falkirk and Stirling, and am delighted with their appearance: richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c., but no harvest at all yet, except, in one or two places, an old-wife's ridge. Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandering Devon's banks, to pay my respects to some Ayr-shire folks at Harviestoun. After breakfast, we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston; and, after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir, though I had not had any prior tie—though they had not been the brother and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine—I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years, so you can have very little idea of what these young folks are now. Your brother is as tall as you are, but slender rather than otherwise; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him.—His make, and particularly his manner, resemble you, but he will still have a finer face. (I put in the word *still*, to please Mrs. Hamilton.) Good sense, modesty, and at the same time a just idea of that respect that man owes to man, and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and the Omega, he has a heart that might adorn the breast of a poet! Grace has a good figure, and the look of health and cheerfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beenie; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first; but, as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner, and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte I cannot speak in common terms of admiration: she is not only beautiful, but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness, and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our riding to the Falls,

Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress:—

> ——"Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
> That one would almost say her body thought."

Her eyes are fascinating; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.§

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks? I had a thousand questions to answer about you. I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John* was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar, and that Willie was going on still very pretty; but I have it in commission to tell her from them that beauty is a poor silly bauble without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady Mackenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore throat, somewhat marred our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayr-shire for four weeks.—My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor Mackenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other.

I am ever, Sir,
Yours most gratefully,
R. B.

No. LXIX.

TO Mr. WALKER,

BLAIR OF ATHOLE.

Inverness, 5th September, 1787.

My dear Sir:

I have just time to write the foregoing,† and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of a half-hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was extempore, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol's chat and the jogging of the chaise would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need! I shall never forget.

The "little angel-band!" I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyers. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair; the amiable, the truly noble duchess,‡ with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table: the lovely "olive plants," as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother: the beautiful Mrs. G—; the lovely, sweet Miss C. &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality—markedly kind indeed. Mr. Graham of Fintray's charms of conversation—Sir W. Murray's friendship. In short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company raises an honest glow in my bosom.

R. B.

[Mr. Walker, to whom this letter is addressed, was Tutor to the children of the Duke of Athol. He afterwards became Professor of Humanity (Classical Literature) in the University of Glasgow. He was a native of Ayrshire, and an accomplished scholar and gentleman. Happening to be in Edinburgh when Burns made his first appearance there, he sought his acquaintance, and was his frequent companion at the tables of Blair and Stewart. On his third and last excursion into the Highlands, the Poet found Walker an useful and prudent friend. With considerable tact he separated Burns from Nicol; and, having provided the latter with a fishing-rod and some choice wine to drink by the secluded pools of the Bruar, carried the bard into the company of the ladies of the house of Athole, and made him acquainted with Graham of Fintray. He visited him, too, at Dumfries, and, when the copyright of Currie's edition had expired, he wrote, with considerable taste and feeling, his life anew, and edited his poems. All that passed under his own eye the Professor related with dramatic truth and ease: his account of Burns at the table of Dr. Blair, and of his two days' conversation with him in 1795, are fine specimens of his talents. He died in 1831.—Cunningham.]

No. LXX.

TO Mr. GILBERT BURNS

Edinburgh, 17th September, 1787.

My dear Brother:

I arrived here safe yesterday evening, after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near

§ [Miss Charlotte Hamilton was celebrated by Burns in his charming song, "The Banks of the Devon." She became the wife of Dr. Adair, physician in Harrowgate, and has been dead for some years.]

* [Son of Mr. Gavin Hamilton—the "wee curlie Johnnie" of *The Dedication*, now [1840] residing in London.

† [The Humble Petition of Bruar-water. See page 275.]

‡ [Jane, daughter of Charles, ninth Lord Cathcart. The "little angel band" consisted of Lady Charlotte Murray, aged twelve, afterwards the wife of Sir John Menzies of Castle-Menzies; Lady Amelia, aged seven, now Viscountess Strathallan; and Lady Elizabeth, an infant of five months, now Lady Macgregor Murray of Lanrick.]

six hundred miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went through the heart of the Highlands by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and Druidical circles of stones, to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole; thence across Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the duke's seats, where I had the honour of spending nearly two days with his Grace and family; thence many miles through a wild country among cliffs grey with eternal snows and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey and went down the stream through Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music;* Badenoch, &c., till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth; there I saw the identical bed in which tradition says king Duncan was murdered: lastly, from Fort George to Inverness.

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen, thence to Stonehive,† where James Burness, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations, and found our aunts, Jean and Isabel, still alive, and hale old women. John Cairn, though born the same year with our father, walks as vigorously as I can—they have had several letters from his son in New York. William Brand is likewise a stout old fellow; but further particulars I delay till I see you, which will be in two or three weeks. The rest of my stages are not worth rehearsing: warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing-towns or fertile carses? I slept at the famous Brodie of Brodie's one night, and dined at Gordon Castle next day, with the duke, duchess, and family. I am thinking to cause my old mare to meet me, by means of John Ronald, at Glasgow; but you shall hear farther from me before I leave Edinburgh. My duty and many compliments from the north to my mother; and my brotherly compliments to the rest. I have been trying for a berth for William, but am not likely to be successful. Farewell.

R. B.

[The Bard's own account of this Highland Tour to his brother, as communicated in the above letter, is highly characteristic and expressive of his feelings at that time. He well knew in what light the prudent Gilbert would view those dashing expensive journeys. Gilbert was a calm, considerate, and sensible man, with next to nothing of the enthusiast or the Poet in his nature: he was as unlikely to enter into the high musings and raptures of Robert as to carry conviviality to excess. As a critic and editor, he displayed considerable taste, feeling, and knowledge: his merits as a farmer stand on a sure foundation, though some men of the west aver that he was too much of an arm-chair agriculturist. The fame of his brother, as well as his own merits, helped him onwards: he died in 1827, much and widely respected.

"The letters that passed between Gilbert and his brother are among the most precious of the series—here there could be no disguise. That the brothers had entire knowledge of, and confidence in, each other, no one can doubt; and the plain, manly, affectionate language in which they both write is truly honourable to them and to the parents who reared them."—LOCKHART.]

No. LXXI.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS,‡

[NOW MRS. HAY, OF EDINBURGH.]

Sept. 26, 1787.

I SEND Charlotte the first number of the songs; I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second.§ You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book; but though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intend to make it a description of some kind: the whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, Cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline * * * * a senseless rabble.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," &c.‖ I sup-

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* [A quick kind of dancing tunes are called Strathspeys, from this vale, the place of their nativity.]

† [Stonehaven.]

‡ [To this young lady the Poet addressed twelve or fourteen letters, most of them in his happiest manner. They contained it seems so many allusions to the beauty and so many compliments to the acquirements of Charlotte Hamilton, as was displeasing to

"The fairest maid on Devon's banks."

In a moment of prejudice or passion, she threw the originals into the fire; and nothing was saved except such fragments as were found among the Bard's memoranda. They appear in the order of their dates. Miss Margaret Chalmers was the youngest daughter of the deceased James Chalmers, Esq., of Fingland. She married, December 9th, 1788, Lewis Hay, Esq. of the banking firm of Sir William Forbes, James Hunter, and Company, Edinburgh. Mrs. Hay afterwards resided at Pau, in the South of France.]

§ Of the Scots Musical Museum.

‖ [The Rev. John Skinner, episcopal minister at Longside, near Peterhead.]

pose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries, to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms.—Do tell that to Lady Mackenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with Prudence." What a blessed fire-side!—How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!

Miss N. is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out of Harvieston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind.—I have seen the day—but that is a "tale of other years."—In my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'etre un miserable esclave:* as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure, "which the world cannot give, nor take away," I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.

R. B.

No. LXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Without date.

I HAVE been at Dumfries, and at one visit more shall be decided about a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it; but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly prudent, sober man (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family), I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and at our leisure take another farm in the neighbourhood.

I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now completed. The air is admirable: true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song, which an Inverness lady sang me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go in Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well; and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only sincere, but just.

[Here follows the song of "The Banks of the Devon."—See page 368.]

R. B.

No. LXXIII.

TO JAMES HOY, Esq.

GORDON CASTLE.

Edinburgh, 20th October, 1787.

SIR:

I will defend my conduct in giving you this trouble, on the best of Christian principles—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even unto them."—I shall certainly, among my legacies, leave my latest curse on that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon. May that obstinate son of Latin prose [Nicol] be curst to Scotch mile periods, and damned to seven league paragraphs; while Declension and Conjugation, Gender, Number, and Time, under the ragged banners of Dissonance and Disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array.

Allow me, Sir, to strengthen the small claim I have to your acquaintance, by the following request. An engraver, James Johnson, in Edinburgh, has, not from mercenary views, but from an honest Scotch enthusiasm, set about collecting all our native songs and setting them to music; particularly those that have never been set before. Clarke, the well known musician, presides over the musical arrangement, and Drs. Beattie and Blacklock, Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, and your humble servant to the utmost of his small power, assist in collecting the old poetry, or sometimes for a fine air make a stanza, when it has no words. The brats, too tedious to mention, claim a parental pang from my bardship. I suppose it will appear in Johnson's second number—the first was published before my acquaintance with him. My request is—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen" is one intended for this number, and I beg a copy of his Grace of Gordon's words to

it, which you were so kind as to repeat to me.* You may be sure we won't prefix the author's name, except you like, though I look on it as no small merit to this work that the names of many of the authors of our old Scotch songs, names almost forgotten, will be inserted. I do not well know where to write to you—I rather write at you; but if you will be so obliging, immediately on receipt of this, as to write me a few lines, I shall perhaps pay you in kind, though not in quality. Johnson's terms are:—each number a handsome pocket volume, to consist at least of a hundred Scotch songs, with basses for the harpsichord, &c. The price to subscribers, 5*s.*; to non-subscribers 6*s.* He will have three numbers, I conjecture.

My direction for two or three weeks will be at Mr. William Cruikshank's, St. James's-square, New-town Edinburgh.

I am,—

Sir,

Your's to command,

R. B.

The answer to the above letter is as follows:—

Gordon Castle, October 31st, 1787.

[Sir:

If you were not sensible of your fault as well as of your loss, in leaving this place so suddenly, I should condemn you to starve upon *cauld kail* for *ae towmont* at least; and as for *Dick Latine* [Mr. Nicol], your travelling companion, without banning him *wi' a'* the curses contained in your letter (which he'll *no* value a *bawbee*) I should give him nought but *Stra' bogie castocks* to chew for *sax ouks*, or aye until he was as sensible of his error as you seem to be of yours.

* * * *

Your song [Bonnie Castle Gordon] I shewed without producing the author; and it was judged by the Duchess to be the production of Dr. Beattie. I sent a copy of it by her Grace's desire to a Mrs. M'Pherson, in Badenoch, who sings *Morag*, and all other Gaelic songs, in great perfection. I have recorded it likewise, by Lady Charlotte's desire, in a book belonging to her Ladyship; where it is in company with a great many other poems and verses, some of the writers of which are no less eminent for their political than for their poetical abilities. When the Duchess was informed that you were the author, she wished you had written the verses in Scotch.

Any letter directed to me here will come to hand safely; and, if sent under the Duke's cover, it will likewise come free; that is, as long as the Duke is in this country.

I am, Sir, yours sincerely,

James Hoy.]

No. LXXIV.

TO Rev. JOHN SKINNER.

Edinburgh, October 25, 1787.

Reverend and Venerable Sir:

Accept, in plain dull prose, my most sincere thanks for the best poetical compliment I ever received. I assure you, Sir, as a poet, you have conjured up an airy demon of vanity in my fancy, which the best abilities in your other capacity would be ill able to lay. I regret, and while I live I shall regret, that, when I was in the north, I had not the pleasure of paying a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song ever Scotland saw—"Tullochgorum's my delight!" The world may think slightingly of the craft of song-making, if they please, but, as Job says—"O! that mine adversary had written a book!"—let them try. There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them, not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language. The only remains of this enchantment, these spells of the imagination, rest with you. Our true brother, Ross of Lochlea, was likewise "owre cannie"—a "wild warlock"—but now he sings among the "sons of the morning."

I have often wished, and will certainly endeavour, to form a kind of common acquaintance among all the genuine sons of Caledonian song. The world, busy in low prosaic pursuits, may overlook most of us; but "reverence thyself." The world is not our *peers*, so we challenge the jury. We can lash that world, and find ourselves a very great source of amusement and happiness independent of that world.

There is a work going on in Edinburgh, just now, which claims your best assistance. An engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch songs, with the music, that can be found. Songs in the English language, if by Scotchmen, are admitted, but the music must all be Scotch. Drs. Beattie and Blacklock are lending a hand, and the first musician in town presides over that department. I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information remaining respecting their origin, authors, &c. &c. This last is but a very fragment business; but at the end of his second number—the first is already published—a small

* [Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon, who entertained Burns at Gordon Castle, possessed considerable abilities for song writing, though few of his verses have been made public. The song alluded to by Burns seems to have been obtained from Mr. Hoy, as it appears in the second volume of the Museum.]

account will be given of the authors, particularly to preserve those of latter times. Your three songs, "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," and "Ewie wi' the crookit Horn," go in this second number. I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found, as you would wish them to continue in future times; and if you would be so kind to this undertaking as send any songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish, your name will be inserted among the other authors,—"Nill ye, will ye." One half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors. Paper is done. I beg to hear from you; the sooner the better, as I leave Edinburgh in a fortnight or three weeks.*—I am,

With the warmest sincerity, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,—R. B.

No. LXXV.

TO JAMES HOY, Esq.

GORDON CASTLE.†

Edinburgh, 6th November, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I WOULD have wrote you immediately on receipt of your kind letter, but a mixed impulse

* [The Poet summoned almost all the Bards of Caledonia to aid him in providing words for the Scottish airs in Johnson's Musical Museum. The songs of "Tullochgorum" and "John of Badenyon" have made the name of Skinner dear to all the lovers of Scottish poetry. He was a man cheerful and pious, and performed his duties as episcopal pastor of Longside for nearly sixty-five years. Burns met his son, afterwards Bishop of Aberdeen, during his last tour in the north, and lamented that he did not know where Linshart—his father's residence—lay, as he would have gone twenty miles out of his way to have seen the author of "Tullochgorum." The poetical works of Skinner were collected soon after his death, on the 16th of June, 1807, and published in Edinburgh. He was a wit as well as a priest and poet. His grandson, John, paid less regard to his lessons than he wished: he suddenly desisted from instructing him, and said —"Oh! I forgot the old prophecy—Thomas the Rhymer has settled the matter—I shall trouble myself no farther." The boy turned to his grandfather, and said, "What has he said of me, grandpapa?"—"O! more than I like; ye shall hear—

"'The world shall four John Skinners see,
The first shall teach a school;
The other two shall parsons be,
The *fourth* shall be a *fool*.'"

John Skinner the fourth flew to his task, and became a learned man. —CUNNINGHAM.

The following is Mr. Skinner's reply to Burns:—

Linshart, November 14th, 1787.

SIR,

YOUR kind letter, without date, but of post-mark October 25th, came to hand only this day; and, to testify my punctuality to my poetic engagement, I sit down immediately to answer it in kind.

Your acknowledgment of my poor but just encomiums on your surprising genius, and your opinion of my rhyming excursions, are both, I think, by far too high. The difference between our two tracts of education and ways of life is entirely in your favour, and gives you the preference every manner of way. I know a classical education will not create a versifying taste, but it mightily improves and assists it;—and though, where both these meet, there may sometimes be ground for approbation, yet where taste appears single, as it were, and neither cramped nor supported by acquisition, I will always sustain the justice of its prior claim to applause. A small portion of taste, this way, I have had almost from childhood, especially in the old Scottish dialect; and it is as old a thing as I remember, my fondness for "Christ's-kirk on the green," which I had by heart ere I was twelve years of age, and which some years ago I attempted to turn into Latin verse. While I was young, I dabbled a good deal in these things: but on getting the black gown I gave it pretty much over, 'till my daughters grew up, who, being all good singers, plagued me for words to some of their favourite tunes, and so extorted these effusions, which have made a public appearance beyond my expectations, and contrary to my intentions, at the same time that I hope there is nothing to be found in them uncharacteristic, or unbecoming the cloth, which I would always wish to see respected.

As to the assistance you propose from me in the undertaking you are engaged in [his collection of Scottish songs], I am sorry I cannot give it so far as I could wish, and you, perhaps, expect. My daughters, who were my only intelligencers, are all *foris familiate*, and the old woman, their mother, has lost that taste. There are two from my own pen, which I might give you, if worth the while. One to the old Scottish tune of *Dumbarton drums*. The other, perhaps, you have met with, as your noble friend, the Duchess, has, I am told, heard of it. It was squeezed out of me by a brother parson in her neighbourhood, to accommodate a new Highland reel for the Marquis's birth-day, to the stanza of

"Tune your fiddles, tune them sweetly," &c.

If this last answer your purpose, you may have it from a brother of mine, Mr. James Skinner, Writer, in Edinburgh, who I believe can give the music too.

There is another humourous thing, I have heard said to be done by the Catholic priest, Geddes, and which hit my taste much.

"There was a wee wifiekie, was coming frae the fair,
Had gotten a little drapikie, which bred her meikle care;
It took upo' the wifie's heart, and she began to spue,
And quo' the wee wifiekie, 'I wish I binna fou,'" &c.

I have heard of another new composition, by a young ploughman of my acquaintance, that I am vastly pleased with, to the tune of *The humours of Glen*, which I fear won't do, as the music, I am told, is of Irish original. I have mentioned these, such as they are, to show you my readiness to oblige you, and to contribute my mite, if I could, to the patriotic work you have in hand, and which I wish all success to. You have only to notify your mind, and what you want of the above shall be sent you.

Meantime, while you are thus employed, do not sheath your own proper and piercing weapon. From what I have seen of yours already, I am inclined to hope for much good. One lesson of virtue and morality delivered in your amusing style, and from such as you, will operate more than dozens would do from such as me, who shall be told it is our employment, and be never more minded: whereas, from a pen like yours, as being one of the many, what comes will be admired. Admiration will produce regard, and regard will leave an impression, especially *when example goes along*.

Now binna saying I'm ill-bred,
Else, by my troth, I'll no be glad;
For cadgers, ye have heard it said,
And sic like fry,
Maun ay be harland in their trade,
And sae maun I.

Wishing you, from my poet-pen, all success, and in my other character, all happiness and heavenly direction,

I remain, with esteem,
Your sincere friend,
JOHN SKINNER."]

† ["James Hoy, librarian to the Duke of Gordon, was in all respects a very remarkable character: in singleness of heart and simplicity of manners he rivalled Dominie Sampson; nor did a forty years' intercourse with the wealthy and the far-descended work any change in his manners—the originality of the man was neither smoothed nor softened, nor

of gratitude and esteem whispered to me that I ought to send you something by way of return. When a poet owes anything, particularly when he is indebted for good offices, the payment that usually recurs to him—the only coin indeed in which he is probably conversant—is rhyme. Johnson sends the books by the fly, as directed, and begs me to enclose his most grateful thanks: my return I intended should have been one or two poetic bagatelles which the world have not seen, or, perhaps, for obvious reasons, cannot see. These I shall send you before I leave Edinburgh. They may make you laugh a little, which, on the whole, is no bad way of spending one's precious hours and still more precious breath: at any rate, they will be, though a small, yet a very sincere mark of my respectful esteem for a gentleman whose farther acquaintance I should look upon as a peculiar obligation.

The duke's song, independent totally of his dukeship, charms me. There is I know not what of wild happiness of thought and expression peculiarly beautiful in the old Scottish song style, of which his Grace, old venerable Skinner, the author of "Tullochgorum," &c., and the late Ross, of Lochlea, of true Scottish poetic memory, are the only modern instances that I recollect, since Ramsay with his contemporaries, and poor Bob Fergusson went to the world of deathless existence and truly immortal song. The mob of mankind, that many-headed beast, would laugh at so serious a speech about an old song; but, as Job says, "O that mine adversary had written a book!" Those who think that composing a Scotch song is a trifling business—let them try.

I wish my Lord Duke would pay a proper attention to the Christian admonition—"Hide not your candle under a bushel," but "Let your light shine before men." I could name half a dozen dukes that I guess are a devilish deal worse employed; nay, I question if there are half a dozen better: perhaps there are not half that scanty number whom Heaven has favoured with the tuneful, happy, and, I will say, glorious gift.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

did it lessen in the least his stoical indifference to riches. His love of learning, and the example of simplicity and virtue which he exhibited, gained him respect far and wide:—the Duke's library was to him a castle, nor did he love to leave his command, save when on Sunday he rode to Elgin, to attend the Seceder meeting-house, for he was a zealous dissenter from the established kirk. It was the business of Hoy, during the day, to store his mind with all such knowledge as the publications of the time supplied, and then over a bottle of claret, after dinner, impart to his Grace of Gordon all that he reckoned valuable or important. He studied astronomy, entomology, and botany, and made valuable observations on each: if he despised wealth, he was equally indifferent about fame; his self-denial regarding all things that worldly men valued was wonderful. Burns was delighted with his blunt straight-forward manner; and the librarian strove, it is said, to re-pay it by giving the postboy a crown to contrive, no matter how, to stop the Bard's departure from Fochabers. The fierce impetuosity of Nicol prevented this."—ROBERT CARRUTHERS.]

No. LXXVI.

TO MISS M——N.

November, 1787.

Saturday Noon, No. 2, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.

HERE have I sat, my dear Madam, in the stony altitude of perplexed study for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card; my fixed eye insensible to the very light of day poured around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter, all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliment is such a miserable Greenland expression, lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my constitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling on you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, some time about seven or after, I shall wait on you for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box I put into the hands of the proper connoisseur; but it is, like Willy Gaw's Skate, past redemption. The broken glass, likewise, went under review; but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric.

I am, dear Madam,

With all the sincerity of enthusiasm,

Your very obedient servant,

R. B.

[Concerning the name of this lady inquiries have been made in vain. The communication appeared, for the first time, in "Burns' Letters to Clarinda." The import of those celebrated letters has been much misrepresented; they are sentimental flirtations chiefly—a sort of Corydon-and-Phillis affair, with here and there passages over-warm, and expressions too graphic, such as all had to endure who were honoured with the correspondence of Burns.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. LXXVII.

TO Miss CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Nov. 21, 1787.

I HAVE one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well-filled sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's* goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare to my God I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so, like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall, after a few letters, hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now none of your polite hints about flattery: I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though, thank heaven, I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss—A LOVER.

Charlotte and you are just two favourite resting-places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny wilderness of this world. God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle: I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. "Some folk hae a hantle o' fauts, an' I'm but a ne'er-do-weel."

Afternoon—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick by the title of the "Wabster's grace:"—

"Some say we're thieves, and e'en sae are we,
Some say we lie, and e'en sae do we!
Gude forgie us, and I hope sae will he!
——Up and to your looms, lads."

R. B.

No. LXXVIII.

TO Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE,

EDINBURGH.

Edinburgh, Sunday Morning, Nov. 23, 1787.

I BEG, my dear Sir, you would not make any appointment to take us to Mr. Ainslie's to-night. On looking over my engagements, constitution, present state of my health, some little vexatious soul concerns, &c., I find I can't sup abroad to-night. I shall be in to-day till one o'clock if you have a leisure hour.

You will think it romantic when I tell you that I find the idea of your friendship almost necessary to my existence.—You assume a proper length of face in my bitter hours of blue-devilism, and you laugh fully up to my highest wishes at my good things.—I don't know, upon the whole, if you are one of the first fellows in God's world, but you are so to me. I tell you this just now in the conviction that some inequalities in my temper and manner may perhaps sometimes make you suspect that I am not so warmly as I ought to be your friend.

R. B.

No. LXXIX.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE.

Mauchline, ——— 1787.

My dear Ainslie:

THERE is one thing for which I set great store by you as a friend, and it is this: "I have not a friend upon earth, besides yourself, to whom I can talk nonsense without forfeiting some degree of esteem. Now, to one like me, who never weighs what he says, such a friend is a valuable treasure. I was never a knave, but I have been a fool all my life, and, in spite of all my endeavours, I see now plainly that I shall never be wise. Now it rejoices my heart to have met with such a fellow as you, who, though you are not just such a hopeless fool as I, yet I trust you will never listen so much to the temptation of the devil, as to grow so very wise that you will in the least disrespect an honest fellow, because he is a fool. In short, I have set you down as the staff of my old age, when the whole host of my friends will, after a decent show of pity, have forgot me.

'Though in the morn comes sturt and strife,
Yet joy may come ere noon;
And I hope to live a merry, merry life,
When a' their days are done.'

Write me soon, were it but a few lines, just to tell me how that good sagacious man your father is—that kind dainty body your mother—that strapping child your brother Douglas—and my friend Rachael, who is as far before Rachael of old as she was before her bleareyed sister Leah.

R. B.

No. LXXX.

TO JAMES DALRYMPLE, Esq.,

ORANGEFIELD.

Edinburgh, 1787.

Dear Sir:

I SUPPOSE the devil is so elated with his success with you that he is determined by a

* [Miss Hamilton.]

coup de main to complete his purposes on you all at once, in making you a poet. I broke open the letter you sent me; hummed over the rhymes; and, as I saw they were extempore, said to myself, they were very well; but when I saw at the bottom a name that I shall ever value with grateful respect, "I gapit wide, but naething spak." I was nearly as much struck as the friends of Job, of affliction-bearing memory, when they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and spake not a word.

I am naturally of a superstitious cast, and as soon as my wonder-scared imagination regained its consciousness, and resumed its functions, I cast about what this mania of yours might portend. My foreboding ideas had the wide stretch of possibility; and several events, great in their magnitude, and important in their consequences, occurred to my fancy. The downfal of the conclave, or the crushing of the Cork rumps; a ducal coronet to Lord George Gordon, and the protestant interest; or St. Peter's keys, to * * * * * *.

You want to know how I come on. I am just in *statu quo*, or, not to insult a gentleman with my Latin, in "auld use and wont." The noble Earl of Glencairn took me by the hand to-day, and interested himself in my concerns, with a goodness like that benevolent being, whose image he so richly bears. He is a stronger proof of the immortality of the soul than any that philosophy ever produced. A mind like his can never die. Let the worshipful squire H. L., or the reverend Mass J. M. go into their primitive nothing. At best, they are but ill-digested lumps of chaos, only one of them strongly tinged with bituminous particles and sulphureous effluvia. But my noble patron, eternal as the heroic swell of magnanimity, and the generous throb of benevolence, shall look on with princely eye at "the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds."* R. B.

No. LXXXI.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

Edinburgh, December, 1787.

My Lord:

I know your lordship will disapprove of my ideas in a request I am going to make to you; but I have weighed, long and seriously weighed, my situation, my hopes and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme if I can possibly effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise; I am told that your lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.

My brother's farm is but a wretched lease, but I think he will probably weather out the remaining seven years of it; and, after the assistance which I have given and will give him, to keep the family together, I think, by my guess, I shall have rather better than two hundred pounds, and instead of seeking, what is almost impossible at present to find, a farm that I can certainly live by, with so small a stock, I shall lodge this sum in a banking-house, a sacred deposit, excepting only the calls of uncommon distress or necessitous old age.

These, my lord, are my views: I have resolved from the maturest deliberation; and now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your lordship's patronage is the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to any body else. Indeed my heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of the great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill-qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as the cold denial; but to your lordship I have not only the honour, the comfort, but the pleasure of being

Your lordship's much obliged

And deeply indebted humble servant,

R. B.

[For some notice of this nobleman, see "The Poet's Lament," page 309.]

No. LXXXII.

TO Miss CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Dec. 12, 1787.

I am here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion; and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have formed a "quadruple alliance" to guarantee the other.

* [James Dalrymple, Esq. of Orangefield, interested himself in the fortunes of Burns: he was a gentleman by birth, and, as this letter intimates, something of a poet. Who the worshipful squire H. L. was we have not been told: Mass J. M. was probably Mr. Moodie, minister of Riccarton.—Cunningham.]

I got my fall on Saturday, and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and am got through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my book-binder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town; and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I enclose you a proof copy of the "Banks of the Devon," which present with my best wishes to Charlotte. The "Ochil-hills"* you shall probably have next week for yourself.—None of your fine speeches!

R. B.

No. LXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, Dec. 19, 1787.

I BEGIN this letter in answer to your's of the 17th current, which is not yet cold since I read it. The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good to see my bard-ship, not on my poetic, but on my oaken, stilts; throwing my best leg with an air! and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance as a May frog leaping across the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth, after the long-expected shower!

I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see any where in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, poverty; attended, as he always is, by iron-fisted oppression, and leering contempt; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day already, and still my motto is—I DARE! My worst enemy is *moi-meme*. I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion: and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence, and forethought move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and, alas! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures I would envy, a horse in his wild state, traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

R. B.

No. LXXXIV.

TO CHARLES HAY, Esq.,

ADVOCATE,†

ENCLOSING VERSES ON THE DEATH OF THE LORD PRESIDENT.

December, 1787.

SIR:

THE enclosed poem was written in consequence of your suggestion, last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. It cost me an hour or two of next morning's sleep, but did not please me; so it lay by, an ill-digested effort, till the other day that I gave it a critic brush.

These kind of subjects are much hackneyed; and, besides, the wailings of the rhyming tribe over the ashes of the great are cursedly suspicious, and out of all character for sincerity.—These ideas damped my muse's fire; however, I have done the best I could, and, at all events, it gives me an opportunity of declaring that I have the honour to be,

Sir,
Your obliged humble Servant,
R. B.

LXXXV.

TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD.

Edinburgh, December, 1787.

SIR:

MR. MACKENZIE, in Mauchline, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man, and (what to me is incomparably dearer) my fame as a poet. I have, Sir, in one or two instances, been patronized by those of your character in life, when I was introduced to their notice by * * * * * friends to them, and honoured acquaintances to me; but you are the first gentleman in the country whose benevolence and goodness of heart has interested himself for me, unsolicited and unknown.

I am not master enough of the etiquette of these matters to know, nor did I stay to inquire, whether formal duty bade, or cold propriety disallowed, my thanking you in this manner, as I am convinced, from the light in which you kindly view me, that you will do me the justice

* [The song in honour of Miss Chalmers, beginning "Where braving angry winter's storms. See p. 374.]

† [Ultimately a judge, under the designation of Lord Newton. He died October 19th, 1811, leaving a strong reputation for his bacchanalianism, of which many whimsical anecdotes are told.]

to believe this letter is not the manœuvre of the needy, sharping author, fastening on those in upper life who honour him with a little notice of him or his works. Indeed, the situation of poets is generally such, to a proverb, as may, in some measure, palliate that prostitution of heart and talents they have at times been guilty of. I do not think prodigality is, by any means, a necessary concomitant of a poetic turn, but I believe a careless, indolent attention to economy is almost inseparable from it; then there must be, in the heart of every bard of Nature's making, a certain modest sensibility, mixed with a kind of pride, that will ever keep him out of the way of those windfalls of fortune which frequently light on hardy impudence and foot-licking servility. It is not easy to imagine a more helpless state than his whose poetic fancy unfits him for the world, and whose character as a scholar gives him some pretensions to the *politesse* of life—yet is as poor as I am.

For my part, I thank Heaven my star has been kinder; learning never elevated my ideas above the peasant's shed, and I have an independent fortune at the plough-tail.

I was surprised to hear that any one who pretended in the least to the manners of the gentleman should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of such a one as I am, and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. With a tear of gratitude, I thank you, Sir, for the warmth with which you interposed in behalf of my conduct. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion, but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow-creatures, I hope I shall ever preserve. I have no return, Sir, to make you for your goodness but one—a return which, I am persuaded, will not be unacceptable—the honest, warm wishes of a grateful heart for your happiness, and every one of that lovely flock, who stand to you in a filial relation. If ever calumny aim the poisoned shaft at them, may friendship be by to ward the blow!

R. B.

No. LXXXVI.

TO Miss WILLIAMS,*

ON READING THE POEM OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.

I KNOW very little of scientific criticism, so all I can pretend to in that intricate art is merely to note, as I read along, what passages strike me as being uncommonly beautiful, and where the expression seems to be perplexed or faulty.

The poem opens finely. There are none of these idle prefatory lines which one may skip over before one comes to the subject. Verses 9th and 10th in particular,

> "Where ocean's unseen bound
> Leaves a drear world of waters round,"

are truly beautiful. The simile of the hurricane is likewise fine; and, indeed, beautiful as the poem is, almost all the similes rise decidedly above it. From verse 31st to verse 50th is a pretty eulogy on Britain. Verse 36th, "That foul drama deep with wrong," is nobly expressive. Verse 46th, I am afraid, is rather unworthy of the rest; "to dare to feel" is an idea that I do not altogether like. The contrast of valour and mercy, from the 46th verse to the 50th, is admirable.

Either my apprehension is dull, or there is something a little confused in the apostrophe to Mr. Pitt. Verse 55th is the antecedent to verses 57th and 58th, but in verse 58th the connection seems ungrammatical:—

> "Powers * * * * *
> * * * * * *
> With no gradations mark'd their flight,
> But rose at once to glory's height."

Ris'n should be the word instead of rose. Try it in prose. Powers,—their flight marked by no gradations, but [the same powers] risen at once to the height of glory. Likewise, verse 53rd, "For this," is evidently meant to lead on the sense of the verses 59th, 60th, 61st, and 62nd: but let us try how the thread of connection runs:—

> "For this * * * * * *
> * * * * *
> The deeds of mercy that embrace
> A distant sphere, an alien race,
> Shall virtue's lips record, and claim
> The fairest honours of thy name."

I beg pardon if I misapprehend the matter, but this appears to me the only imperfect passage in the poem. The comparison of the sunbeam is fine.

The compliment to the Duke of Richmond is, I hope, as just as it is certainly elegant. The thought,

* [Miss Williams had in the previous June addressed a complimentary epistle to Burns, which appeared in the Edinburgh Magazine for Sept. 1817, when the above letter also appeared for the first time, along with the following note by the Editor—the late Thomas Pringle.

"The Critique, though not without some traits of the poet's usual sound judgment and discrimination, appears on the whole to be much in the strain of those gallant and flattering responses which men of genius sometimes find it incumbent to issue when consulted upon the productions of their female admirers." In one of her letters to Burns, the poetess, after expressing her admiration of "The Vision," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and "The Mouse," says—"My mother's family is Scotch, and the dialect has been familiar to me from my infancy; I am, therefore, qualified to taste the charms of your native poetry, and, as I feel the strongest attachment for Scotland, I share the triumph of your country in producing your laurels." The merits of Miss Williams are widely known; nor is it little honour to her muse that her fine song of "Evan Banks" has been imputed to Burns by Cromek and other good judges.—]

"Virtue * * * *
* * * * *
Sends from her unsullied source
The gems of thought their purest force,"

is exceeding beautiful. The idea, from verse 81st to the 85th, that the "blest degree" is like the beams of morning ushering in the glorious day of liberty, ought not to pass unnoticed or unapplauded. From verse 85th to verse 108th, is an animated contrast between the unfeeling selfishness of the oppressor on the one hand, and the misery of the captive on the other. Verse 88th might perhaps be amended thus: "Nor ever *quit* her narrow maze." We are said to *pass* a bound, but we *quit* a maze. Verse 100th is exquisitely beautiful:—

"They, whom wasted blessings tire."

Verse 110th is I doubt a clashing of metaphors; "to load a span" is, I am afraid, an unwarrantable expression. In verse 114th, "Cast the universe in shade," is a fine idea. From the 115th verse to the 142nd is a striking description of the wrongs of the poor African. Verse 120th, "The load of unremitted pain," is a remarkable, strong expression. The address to the advocates for abolishing the slave-trade, from verse 143rd to verse 208th is animated with the true life of genius. The picture of oppression,—

"While she links her impious chain,
And calculates the price of pain;
Weighs agony in sordid scales,
And marks if death or life prevails,"—

is nobly executed.

What a tender idea is in verse 180th! Indeed, that whole description of home may vie with Thomson's description of home, somewhere in the beginning of his Autumn. I do not remember to have seen a stronger expression of misery than is contained in these verses:—

"Condemned, severe extreme, to live
When all is fled that life can give."

The comparison of our distant joys to distant objects is equally original and striking.

The character and manners of the dealer in the infernal traffic is a well done, though a horrid, picture. I am not sure how far introducing the sailor was right; for, though the sailor's common characteristic is generosity, yet, in this case, he is certainly not only an unconcerned witness, but, in some degree, an efficient agent in the business. Verse 224th is a nervous .... expressive—"The heart convulsive anguish breaks." The description of the captive wretch when he arrives in the West Indies is carried on with equal spirit. The thought that the oppressor's sorrow, on seeing the slave pine, is like the butcher's regret when his destined lamb dies a natural death, is exceedingly fine.

I am got so much into the cant of criticism that I begin to be afraid lest I have nothing except the cant of it; and, instead of elucidating my author, am only benighting myself. For this reason, I will not pretend to go through the whole poem. Some few remaining beautiful lines, however, I cannot pass over. Verse 280th is the strongest description of selfishness I ever saw. The comparison in verses 285th and 286th is new and fine; and the line, "Your arms to penury you lend," is excellent.

In verse 317th, "like" should certainly be "as" or "so;" for instance—

"His sway the hardened bosom leads
To cruelty's remorseless deeds;
As (or, so) the blue lightning when it springs
With fury on its livid wings,
Darts on the goal with rapid force,
Nor heeds that ruin marks its course."

If you insert the word "like" where I have placed "as," you must alter "darts" to "darting," and "heeds" to "heeding," in order to make it grammar. A tempest is a favourite subject with the poets, but I do not remember anything even in Thomson's Winter superior to your verses from the 347th to the 351st. Indeed, the last simile, beginning with "Fancy may dress, &c.," and ending with the 350th verse, is, in my opinion, the most beautiful passage in the poem; it would do honour to the greatest names that ever graced our profession.

I will not beg your pardon, Madam, for these strictures, as my conscience tells me that for once in my life I have acted up to the duties of a Christain, in doing as I would be done by.

R. B.

No. LXXXVII.

TO Mr. RICHARD BROWN,*

IRVINE.

Edinburgh, 30th Dec. 1787.

My dear Sir:

I have met with few things in life which have given me more pleasure than Fortune's

* [Richard Brown was the individual whom Burns, in his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, describes as his companion at Irvine—whose mind was fraught with every manly virtue, and who, nevertheless, was the means of making him regard illicit love with levity. The morning of his life was indeed changeable and stormy; but fortitude, perseverance, and prudence carried him over the troubled waters, and the afternoon of his existence was tranquil and sunny. He corresponded for a time, as will be seen, with the Poet, and even threatened a visit to Ellisland; but on learning how freely he had been written about in the memoir, he changed his mind, and for many years loved not to allude to the Bard of Kyle. He died lately much respected and regretted in Greenock.

It was in December of this year, as intimated by the above letter that the poet became acquainted with Mrs. Mac Lehose,

kindness to you since those days in which we met in the vale of misery; as I can honestly say that I never knew a man who more truly deserved it, or to whom my heart more truly wished it. I have been much indebted since that time to your story and sentiments for steeling my mind against evils, of which I have had a pretty decent share. My will-o'-wisp fate you know: do you recollect a Sunday we spent together in Eglinton woods? You told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces, which encouraged me to endeavour at the character of a poet. I am happy to hear that you will be two or three months at home. As soon as a bruised limb will permit me, I shall return to Ayr-shire, and we shall meet; "and faith, I hope we'll not sit dumb, nor yet cast out!"

I have much to tell you "of men, their manners, and their ways," perhaps a little of the other sex. Apropos, I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Brown. There I doubt not, my dear friend, but you have found substantial happiness. I expect to find you something of an altered, but not a different, man; the wild, bold, generous young fellow composed into the steady affectionate husband, and the fond careful parent. For me, I am just the same will-o'-wisp being I used to be. About the first and fourth quarters of the moon, I generally set in for the trade wind of wisdom; but about the full and change, I am the luckless victim of mad tornadoes, which blow me into chaos. Almighty love still reigns and revels in my bosom; and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow,* who has wit and wisdom more murderously fatal than the assassinating stiletto of the Sicilian bandit, or the poisoned arrow of the savage African. My highland dirk, that used to hang beside my crutches, I have gravely removed into a neighbouring closet, the key of which I cannot command in case of spring-tide paroxysms. You may guess of her wit by the following verses, which she sent me the other day. [See note *To Clarinda* p. 270.]

My best compliments to our friend Allan.—Adieu!

R. B.

a young, beautiful, and talented woman, residing with an infant family in Edinburgh, while her husband was pushing his fortune in the West Indies. She first met the poet in the house of a common friend in Alison's Square, Potterrow, at tea. The sprightly and intelligent character of the lady made a powerful impression on the poet, and she was in turn pleased to meet a man of such extraordinary genius. A friendship of the intellect and the more refined sentiments took place between them, and gave rise to a series of letters from Burns, of a peculiarly ardent and eloquent character, which he addressed to the fair lady under the name of Clarinda.]

* [This was a slip of the pen—Burns knew well enough she was a married woman, and that her husband was then in Jamaica.]

No. LXXXVIII.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON.

Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT is indeed with the highest pleasure that I congratulate you on the return of days of ease and nights of pleasure, after the horrid hours of misery in which I saw you suffering existence when last in Ayr-shire. I seldom pray for anybody—"I'm baith dead-sweer and wretched ill o't;" but most fervently do I beseech the Power that directs the world that you may live long and be happy, but live no longer than you are happy. It is needless for me to advise you to have a reverend care of your health. I know you will make it a point never at one time to drink more than a pint of wine (I mean an English pint), and that you will never be witness to more than one bowl of punch at a time, and that cold drams you will never more taste; and, above all things, I am convinced, that after drinking perhaps boiling punch, you will never mount your horse and gallop home in a chill late hour. Above all things, as I understand you are in habits of intimacy with that Boanerges of Gospel powers, Father Auld, be earnest with him that he will wrestle in prayer for you, that you may see the vanity of vanities in trusting to, or even practising the casual moral works of charity, humanity, generosity, and forgiveness of things, which you practised so flagrantly that it was evident you delighted in them, neglecting, or perhaps profanely despising, the wholesome doctrine of faith without works, the only author of salvation. A hymn of thanksgiving would, in my opinion, be highly becoming from you at present, and, in my zeal for your well-being, I earnestly press on you to be diligent in chaunting over the two enclosed pieces of sacred poesy. My best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.

Yours, &c.,

R. B.

[The memory of Burns is warmly cherished by the descendants of the gentleman to whom this letter is addressed. Dr. Hamilton, of Mauchline, bought at the sale of the furniture of "Auld Nanse Tinnock" the arm-chair in which the Bard was accustomed to sit when he visited her howff, and presented it to the Mason

Lodge, where it is now the seat for the grand master.

The worthy Doctor, the eldest son of Gavin Hamilton, died in the month of Nov. 1839.]

No. LXXXIX.

TO Miss CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.

My dear Madam:

I just now have read yours. The poetic compliments I pay cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point you out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides, I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling you these truths, but let me hear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little. I know what they will say of my poems—by second sight I suppose—for I am seldom out in my conjectures; and you may believe me, my dear madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by any ill-judged compliment. I wish to show to the world the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple prosemen. More for your information—both the pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving angry winter's storms," is already set—the tune is Neil Gow's Lamentation for *Abercairny;* the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's collection of ancient Scots music; the name is "*Ha a Chaillich air mo Dheith.*" My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about *Les Incas*, only I think you mentioned them as being in Creech's possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayr-shire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so any thing, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw your's to ———; it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipt spaniel, he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr. ——— has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it. O selfishness! he owns, in his sober moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated, and his knowledge of his father's disposition, the whole affair is chimerical—yet he *will* gratify an idle *penchant* at the enormous, cruel expense, of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the generous passion of love! he is a gentleman in his mind and manners—*tant pis!* He is a volatile school-boy—the heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Perdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely ——— the derided object of their purse-proud contempt!

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs. ———'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her:

> "As I came in by Glenap,
> I met with an aged woman;
> She bad me cheer up my heart,
> For the best o' my days was comin'."*

This day will decide my affairs with Creech. Things are, like myself, not what they ought to be; yet better than what they appear to be.

> "Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings but himself
> That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

Farewell! remember me to Charlotte.

R. B.

No. XC.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, January 21, 1788.

After six weeks' confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission: for I would not take in any poor, ignorant wretch, by selling out. Lately I was a sixpenny private; and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet: a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice.

As soon as I can bear the journey, which will be, I suppose, about the middle of next week, I leave Edinburgh: and soon after I shall pay my grateful duty at Dunlop-House.

R. B.

No. XCI.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, February 12*th*, 1788.

Some things in your late letters hurt me: not that *you say them*, but that *you mistake me.*

* [This is an old popular rhyme—a great favourite with the Poet. Glenap is in the South of Ayr-shire.]

Religion, my honoured Madam, has not only been all my life my chief dependence but my dearest enjoyment. I have, indeed, been the luckless victim of wayward follies; but, alas! I have ever been "more fool than knave." A mathematician without religion is a probable character: an irreligious poet is a monster.

* * * *

R. B.

No. XCII.

TO THE REV. JOHN SKINNER.

Edinburgh, 14th February, 1788.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

I HAVE been a cripple now near three months, though I am getting vastly better, and have been very much hurried beside, or else I would have wrote you sooner. I must beg your pardon for the epistle you sent me appearing in the Magazine. I had given a copy or two to some of my intimate friends, but did not know of the printing of it till the publication of the Magazine. However, as it does great honour to us both, you will forgive it.

The second volume of the songs I mentioned to you in my last is published to-day. I send you a copy, which I beg you will accept as a mark of the veneration I have long had, and shall ever have, for your character, and of the claim I make to your continued acquaintance. Your songs appear in the third volume, with your name in the index; as I assure you, Sir, I have heard your "Tullochgorum," particularly among our west-country folks, given to many different names, and most commonly to the immortal author of "The Minstrel," who, indeed, never wrote any thing superior to "Gie's a sang, Montgomery cried." Your brother has promised me your verses to the Marquis of Huntley's reel, which certainly deserve a place in the collection. My kind host, Mr. Cruikshank, of the high school here, and said to be one of the best Latinists in this age, begs me to make you his grateful acknowledgments for the entertainment he has got in a Latin publication of yours, that I borrowed for him from your acquaintance and much respected friend in this place, the Reverend Dr. Webster. Mr. Cruikshank maintains that you write the best Latin since Buchanan. I leave Edinburgh to-morrow, but shall return in three weeks. Your song you mentioned in your last, to the tune of "Dumbarton Drums," and the other, which you say was done by a brother in trade of mine, a ploughman, I shall thank you much for a copy of each. I am ever, Reverend Sir, with the most respectful esteem and sincere veneration, yours,

R. B.

No. XCIII.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

Edinburgh, February 15, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I RECEIVED yours with the greatest pleasure. I shall arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening; and beg, if possible, you will meet me on Tuesday. I shall wait for you Tuesday all day. I shall be found at Davies's, Black Bull inn. I am hurried, as if hunted by fifty devils, else I should go to Greenock; but if you cannot possibly come, write me, if possible, to Glasgow, on Monday; or direct to me at Mossgiel by Mauchline; and name a day and place in Ayr-shire, within a fortnight from this date, where I may meet you. I only stay a fortnight in Ayr-shire, and return to Edinburgh. I am ever, my dearest friend, yours,

R. B.

[The letters to Richard Brown, says Professor Walker, written at a period when the Poet was in the full blaze of reputation, shewed that he was at no time so dazzled with success as to forget the friends who had anticipated the public by discovering his merit.]

No. XCIV.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, Sunday, February 15, 1788.

TO-MORROW, my dear madam, I leave Edinburgh. I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in, I could not find; and, indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken. I have entered into the Excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks' instructions; afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go *où il plait à Dieu et mon Roi*. I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of fortune's palace we shall enter in, but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get any thing to do. I wanted *un bût*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate bread, and, though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life: besides, the Commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.

R. B.

No. XCV.

TO Mrs. ROSE, OF KILRAVOCK.

Edinburgh, February 17th, 1788.

Madam:

You are much indebted to some indispensable business I have had on my hands, otherwise my gratitude threatened such a return for your obliging favour as would have tired your patience. It but poorly expresses my feelings to say that I am sensible of your kindness: it may be said of hearts such as yours is, and such, I hope, mine is, much more justly than Addison applies it,—

"Some souls by instinct to each other turn."

There was something in my reception at Kilravock so different from the cold, obsequious, dancing-school bow of politeness, that it almost got into my head that friendship had occupied her ground without the intermediate march of acquaintance. I wish I could transcribe, or rather transfuse into language, the glow of my heart when I read your letter. My ready fancy, with colours more mellow than life itself, painted the beautifully wild scenery of Kilravock—the venerable grandeur of the castle—the spreading woods—the winding river, gladly leaving his unsightly, heathy source, and lingering with apparent delight as he passes the fairy walk at the bottom of the garden;—your late distressful anxieties—your present enjoyments—your dear little angel, the pride of your hopes;—my aged friend, venerable in worth and years, whose loyalty and other virtues will strongly entitle her to the support of the Almighty Spirit here, and his peculiar favour in a happier state of existence. You cannot imagine, Madam, how much such feelings delight me; they are the dearest proofs of my own immortality. Should I never revisit the north, as probably I never will, nor again see your hospitable mansion, were I, some twenty years' hence, to see your little fellow's name making a proper figure in a newspaper paragraph, my heart would bound with pleasure.

I am assisting a friend in a collection of Scottish songs, set to their proper tunes; every air worth preserving is to be included: among others, I have given "Morag," and some few Highland airs which pleased me most, a dress which will be more generally known, though far, far inferior in real merit. As a small mark of my grateful esteem, I beg leave to present you with a copy of the work, as far as it is printed; the Man of Feeling, that first of men, has promised to transmit it by the first opportunity.

I beg to be remembered most respectfully to my venerable friend, and to your little Highland chieftain. When you see the "two fair spirits of the hill," at Kildrummie,* tell them I have done myself the honour of setting myself down as one of their admirers for at least twenty years to come, consequently they must look upon me as an acquaintance for the same period; but, as the Apostle Paul says, "this I ask of grace, not of debt."

I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.

R. B.

[The Poet was hurried away from Kilravock, the reader will remember, by the impetuous temper of his companion, Nicol. Of the elegance of the society which he forsook some idea may be formed from the following letter from the elder Mrs. Rose:—

Kilravock Castle, 30th November, 1787.

Sir:

I hope you will do me the justice to believe that it was no defect in gratitude for your punctual performance of your parting promise that has made me so long in acknowledging it, but merely the difficulty I had in getting the Highland songs you wished to have accurately noted; they are at last inclosed, but how shall I convey along with them those graces they acquired from the melodious voice of one of the fair spirits of the hill of Kildrummie! These I must leave to your imagination to supply. It has powers sufficient to transport you to her side, to recall her accents, and to make them still vibrate in the ears of memory. To her I am indebted for getting the inclosed notes.—They are clothed with 'thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.' These, however, being in an unknown tongue to you, you must again have recourse to that same fertile imagination of yours to interpret them, and suppose a lover's description of the beauties of an adored mistress—why did I say unknown? The language of love is an universal one, that seems to have escaped the confusion of Babel, and to be understood by all nations.

"I rejoice to find that you were pleased with so many things, persons, and places in your northern tour, because it leads me to hope you may be induced to revisit them again. That the old castle of Kilravock, and its inhabitants, were amongst these, adds to my satisfaction. I am even vain enough to admit your very flattering application of the line of Addison; at any rate allow me to believe that 'friendship will maintain the ground she has occupied, in both our hearts,' in spite of absence, and that when we do meet, it will be as acquaintance of a score of years' standing; and on this footing consider me as interested in the future course of your fame, so splendidly commenced. Any communications of the progress of your muse will be received with great gratitude, and the

* Miss Sophia Brodie, of L—, and Miss Rose, of Kilravock.

fire of your genius will have power to warm even us frozen sisters of the north.

"The fire-sides of Kilravock and Kildrummie unite in cordial regards to you. When you incline to figure either in your idea, suppose some of us reading your poems, and some of us singing your songs, and my little Hugh looking at your picture, and you'll seldom be wrong. We remember Mr. Nicol with as much goodwill as we can do anybody who hurried Mr. Burns from us.

Farewell, Sir, I can only contribute the *widow's mite* to the esteem and admiration excited by your merits and genius, but this I give as she did, with all my heart—being sincerely yours,

EL. ROSE."]

No. XCVI.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

Mossgiel, 24th February, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I CANNOT get the proper direction for my friend in Jamaica, but the following will do:—To Mr. Jo. Hutchinson, at Jo. Brownrigg's, Esq., care of Mr. Benjamin Henriquez, merchant, Orange-street, Kingston. I arrived here, at my brother's, only yesterday, after fighting my way through Paisley and Kilmarnock, against those old powerful foes of mine, the devil, the world, and the flesh—so terrible in the fields of dissipation. I have met with few incidents in my life which gave me so much pleasure as meeting you in Glasgow. There is a time of life beyond which we cannot form a tie worthy the name of friendship. "O youth! enchanting stage, profusely blest." Life is a fairy scene: almost all that deserves the name of enjoyment or pleasure is only a charming delusion; and in comes repining age, in all the gravity of hoary wisdom, and wretchedly chases away the bewitching phantom. When I think of life, I resolve to keep a strict lookout in the course of economy, for the sake of worldly convenience and independence of mind; to cultivate intimacy with a few of the companions of youth, that they may be the friends of age; never to refuse my liquorish humour a handful of the sweetmeats of life, when they come not too dear; and, for futurity,—

"The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw!"

How like you my philosophy? Give my best compliments to Mrs. B., and believe me to be,

My dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

R. B.

[The Poet was now nearly recovered from the disaster of the "maimed limb:" he endured his confinement with the more patience that it enabled him to carry on his correspondence with Clarinda—and write songs for Johnson's Musical Museum.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. XCVII.

TO ———.

Mossgiel, Friday Morning.

SIR:

THE language of refusal is to me the most difficult language on earth, and you are the [only] man of the world, excepting one of R^{t}. Honble. designation, to whom it gives me the greatest pain to hold such language. My brother has already got money, and shall want nothing in my power to enable him to fulfil his engagement with you; but to be security on so large a scale, even for a brother, is what I dare not do, except I were in such circumstances of life as that the worst that might happen could not greatly injure me.

I never wrote a letter which gave me so much pain in my life, as I know the unhappy consequences; I shall incur the displeasure of a gentleman for whom I have the highest respect, and to whom I am deeply obliged.

I am ever,

Sir,

Your obliged and very humble Servt.,

ROBERT BURNS.

[The above letter, which now appears for the first time in an edition of the Poet's works, was evidently written towards the end of February, 1788, and before he had settled with his publisher, Creech. He was not then aware how his affairs would turn out, and therefore acted with prudence. It will be seen, in his letter to Dr. Moore, how munificently he acted for the relief of his brother's distresses.]

No. XCVIII.

TO MR. WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK.

Mauchline, March 3d, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

APOLOGIES for not writing are frequently like apologies for not singing—the apology better than the song. I have fought my way severely through the savage hospitality of this country, to send every guest drunk to bed if they can.

I executed your commission in Glasgow, and I hope the cocoa came safe. 'Twas the same price and the very same kind as your former

parcel, for the gentleman recollected your buying there perfectly well.

I should return my thanks for your hospitality (I leave a blank for the epithet, as I know none can do it justice) to a poor, wayfaring bard, who was spent and almost overpowered, fighting with prosaic wickedness in high places; but I am afraid lest you should burn the letter whenever you come to the passage, so I pass over it in silence. I am just returned from visiting Mr. Miller's farm. The friend whom I told you I would take with me was highly pleased with the farm; and as he is, without exception, the most intelligent farmer in the country, he has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans of life before me; I shall balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. I have written Mr. Miller, and shall wait on him when I come to town, which shall be the beginning or middle of next week: I would be in sooner, but my unlucky knee is rather worse, and I fear for some time will scarcely stand the fatigue of my excise instructions. I only mention these ideas to you: and indeed, except Mr. Ainslie, whom I intend writing to to-morrow, I will not write at all to Edinburgh till I return to it. I would send my compliments to Mr. Nicol, but he would be hurt if he knew I wrote to anybody and not to him: so I shall only beg my best, kindest, kindest compliments to my worthy hostess and the sweet little rose-bud.

So soon as I am settled in the routine of life, either as an Excise-officer, or as a farmer, I propose myself great pleasure from a regular correspondence with the only man almost I ever saw who joined the most attentive prudence with the warmest generosity.

I am much interested for that best of men, Mr. Wood; I hope he is in better health and spirits than when I saw him last.

I am ever,
My dearest friend,
Your obliged, humble Servant,
R. B.

* [The "sensible" farmer who accompanied Burns to Dalswinton, and influenced him in taking the farm of Ellisland, was Mr. Tait of Glenconner, to whom the Poet addressed a metrical epistle [see page 248]. The two plans which he says lay before him, were farming and the Excise. The farm of Ellisland was, at the time of the Poet's leaving it, sadly out of heart. The original vigour of the ground had been extracted from it by a succession of occupants who had neither money to purchase manure, nor knowledge in the science of farming. In the hands of the present proprietor it bears tall and weighty crops, and may be compared with the best farms in the parish.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [Dr. Currie omits all allusion to the circumstances which led to a permanent union between Burns and his Jean. That the mind of the Poet, notwithstanding all past irritation, and various entanglements with other beauties, was never altogether alienated from her is evident; but up to June, 1787, when he first returned from Edinburgh to Mauchline, he certainly did not entertain any self-avowed notion of ever again renewing his acquaintance with her. It was in this state of his feelings, that, one day, soon after his return from Edinburgh, when meeting some friends over a glass at John Dow's tavern, close to the residence of his once fondly loved mistress, he chanced to encounter her in the court behind the inn, and was immediately inflamed with all his former affection. Their correspondence was renewed—was attended with its former results—and, towards the end of the year, when the Poet was fixed helplessly in Edinburgh, by a bruised limb, her shame becoming apparent to her parents, she was turned out of doors, and would have been utterly destitute, if she had not obtained shelter from a relation in the village of Ardrossan. Jean was once more delivered of twins—girls—on the 3rd of March, 1788, the date of the above letter: the infants died a few days after their birth.—Ultimately, on the 3d of August, as we learn from the session books, the Poet and Jean were openly married; when Burns being informed that it was customary for the bridegroom, in such cases, to bestow something on the poor of the parish, gave a guinea for that purpose. The ceremony took place in Dow's tavern, unsanctioned by the lady's father, who never, to the day of the Poet's death, would treat him as a friend; even Gavin Hamilton, from respect for the feelings of Armour, declined being present. It was not till the ensuing winter that Mrs. Burns joined her husband at Ellisland—their only child Robert following her in the subsequent spring.—CHAMBERS.]

No. XCIX.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, Esq.

Mauchline, 3rd March, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I AM just returned from Mr. Miller's farm. My old friend whom I took with me was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent sensible farmer in the county,* and his advice has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans before me: I shall endeavour to balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. On the whole, if I find Mr. Miller in the same favourable disposition as when I saw him last, I shall in all probability turn farmer.

I have been through sore tribulation, and under much buffetting of the wicked one since I came to this country. Jean I found banished, forlorn, destitute, and friendless: I have reconciled her to her fate, and I have reconciled her to her mother.†

I shall be in Edinburgh the middle of next week. My farming ideas I shall keep private till I see. I got a letter from Clarinda yesterday, and she tells me she has got no letter of mine but one. Tell her that I wrote to her from Glasgow, from Kilmarnock, from Mauchline, and yesterday from Cumnock as I returned from Dumfries. Indeed she is the only person in Edinburgh I have written to till this day. How are your soul and body putting up?—a little like man and wife, I suppose.

R. B.

No. C.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

Mauchline, 7th March, 1788.

I HAVE been out of the country, my dear friend, and have not had an opportunity of writing till

now, when I am afraid you will be gone out of the country too. I have been looking at farms, and, after all, perhaps I may settle in the character of a farmer. I have got so vicious a bent to idleness, and have ever been so little a man of business, that it will take no ordinary effort to bring my mind properly into the routine: but you will say a "great effort is worthy of you." I say so myself; and butter up my vanity with all the stimulating compliments I can think of. Men of grave, geometrical minds, the sons of "which was to be demonstrated," may cry up reason as much as they please; but I have always found an honest passion, or native instinct, the truest auxiliary in the warfare of this world. Reason almost always comes to me like an unlucky wife to a poor devil of a husband, just in sufficient time to add her reproaches to his other grievances.

I am gratified with your kind inquiries after Jean; as, after all, I may say with Othello—

> ——— "Excellent wretch!
> Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee!"

I go for Edinburgh on Monday.

Yours,—R. B.

No. CI.

TO Mr. MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

Mossgiel, 7th March, 1788.

Dear Sir:

I have partly changed my ideas, my dear friend, since I saw you. I took old Glencon-ner with me to Mr. Miller's farm, and he was so pleased with it that I have wrote an offer to Mr. Miller, which, if he accepts, I shall sit down a plain farmer, the happiest of lives when a man can live by it. In this case I shall not stay in Edinburgh above a week. I set out on Monday, and would have come by Kilmarnock, but there are several small sums owing me for my first edition about Galston and Newmills, and I shall set off so early as to dispatch my business and reach Glasgow by night. When I return, I shall devote a forenoon or two to make some kind of acknowledgment for all the kindness I owe your friendship. Now that I hope to settle with some credit and comfort at home, there was not any friendship or friendly correspondence that promised me more pleasure than yours; I hope I will not be disappointed. I trust the spring will renew your shattered frame, and make your friends happy. You and I have often agreed that life is no great blessing on the whole. The close of life, indeed, to a reasoning age, is—

> "Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
> Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
> Athwart the gloom profound."

But an honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley, be it so; at least there is an end of pain, cure, woes and wants: if that part of us called mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with old-wife prejudices and tales! Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories; and as the many are always weak of consequence, they have often, perhaps always, been deceived: a man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow-creatures—even granting that he may have been the sport at times of passions and instincts—he goes to a great unknown Being, who could have no other end in giving him existence but to make him happy, who gave him those passions and instincts, and well knows their force.

These, my worthy friend, are my ideas; and I know they are not far different from yours. It becomes a man of sense to think for himself, particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark.

Adieu, my dear Sir; God send us a cheerful meeting!

R. B.

No. CII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Mossgiel, 17th March, 1788.

Madam:

The last paragraph in yours of the 20th February affected me most, so I shall begin my answer where you ended your letter. That I am often a sinner with any little wit I have, I do confess: but I have taxed my recollection, to no purpose, to find out when it was employed against you. I hate an ungenerous sarcasm a great deal worse than I do the devil; at least as Milton describes him; and though I may be rascally enough to be sometimes guilty of it myself, I cannot endure it in others. You, my honoured friend, who cannot appear in any light but you are sure of being respectable—you can afford to pass by an occasion to display your wit, because you may depend for fame on your sense; or, if you choose to be silent, you know you can rely on the gratitude of many, and the esteem of all; but, God help us, who are wits or witlings by profession, if we stand not for fame there, we sink unsupported!

I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila. I may say to the fair painter* who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet of his muse Scota, from

* [One of the daughters of Mrs. Dunlop, it is here intimated, was painting a sketch from the Coila of "The Vision." Several eminent artists have embodied various of the scenes in the poetry of Burns. David Allan succeeded in one or two attempts: Stothard hit off three or four happy groupes; Burnet wrought in the very spirit of "John Anderson, my jo;" and Wilkie added charms to the song of "Duncan Gray."]

which, by the bye, I took the idea of Coila ('tis a poem of Beattie's in the Scottish dialect, which perhaps you have never seen):—

"Ye shak your head, but o' my fegs,
Ye've set auld Scota on her legs;
Lang had she lien wi' beffs and flegs,
Bumbaz'd and dizzie,
Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs,
Wae's me, poor hizzie!"

R. B.

No. CIII.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

Edinburgh, March 14th, 1788.

I KNOW, my ever dear friend, that you will be pleased with the news when I tell you I have at last taken a lease of a farm. Yesternight I completed a bargain with Mr. Miller, of Dalswinton, for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles above Dumfries. I begin at Whit-Sunday to build a house, drive lime, &c.;* and heaven be my help! for it will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business. I have discharged all the army of my former pursuits, fancies, and pleasures; a motley host! and have literally and strictly retained only the ideas of a few friends, which I have incorporated into a life-guard. I trust in Dr. Johnson's observation, "Where much is attempted, something is done." Firmness, both in sufferance and exertion, is a character I would wish to be thought to possess: and have always despised the whining yelp of complaint, and the cowardly, feeble resolve.

Poor Miss K. is ailing a good deal this winter, and begged me to remember her to you the first time I wrote to you. Surely woman, amiable woman, is often made in vain. Too delicately formed for the rougher pursuits of ambition; too noble for the dirt of avarice, and even too gentle for the rage of pleasure; formed indeed for, and highly susceptible of, enjoyment and rapture; but that enjoyment, alas! almost wholly at the mercy of the caprice, malevolence, stupidity, or wickedness of an animal at all times comparatively unfeeling, and often brutal.

R. B.

No. CIV.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

Glasgow, 26th March, 1788.

I AM monstrously to blame, my dear Sir, in not writing to you, and sending you the Directory. I have been getting my tack extended, as I have taken a farm; and I have been racking shop accounts with Mr. Creech, both of which, together with watching, fatigue, and a load of care almost too heavy for my shoulders, have in some degree actually fevered me.† I really forgot the Directory yesterday, which vexed me; but I was convulsed with rage a great part of the day. I have to thank you for the ingenious, friendly, and elegant epistle from your friend Mr. Crawford. I shall certainly write to him, but not now. This is merely a card to you, as I am posting to Dumfries-shire, where many perplexing arrangements await me. I am vexed about the Directory; but, my dear Sir, forgive me; these eight days I have been positively crazed. My compliments to Mrs. B. I shall write to you at Grenada.—I am ever, my dearest friend,

Yours,—R. B.

No. CV.

TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN.‡

Mauchline, 31st March, 1788.

YESTERDAY, my dear Sir, as I was riding through a track of melancholy, joyless muirs,

* [In building his farm-house the Poet had to perform the part of superintendent of the works; to dig the foundations, collect the stones, seek the sand, cart the lime, and see that all was performed according to the specifications; these were the uncouth cares of which he afterwards complained.]

† [The excitement to which Burns alludes was occasioned by the dilatory movements of Creech in settling accounts between him and the Poet. The baillie parted with his money as a lover with his mistress—

"With slow, reluctant, amorous delay."

"During the Poet's residence in Glasgow, a characteristic instance occurred of the way in which he would repress petulance and presumption. A young man of some literary pretensions, who had newly commenced business as a bookseller, had been in the practice of writing notices of Burns's Poems in a style so flippant, and withal so patronising, as to excite feelings in the poet towards him very different from what he counted upon. Reckoning, however, upon a very grateful reception from Burns, he was particularly anxious for an early introduction to his company, and, as his friends knew, had been at some pains to prepare himself for making a dazzling impression upon the Ayr-shire ploughman, as it was then the fashion, amongst a certain kind of literary folks, to call the poet. At the moment the introduction took place, Burns was engaged in one of his happiest and most playful veins with my friend and another intimate or two; but, upon the gentleman's presentation, who advanced in a manner sufficiently affable, the 'ploughman' assumed an air of such dignified coldness as froze him into complete silence during the time he remained in his company."—CORRESPONDENT OF THE SCOTSMAN, 1828.]

‡ [Cleghorn had no little skill in musical composition: he was, besides, something of a farmer, and a pleasant and social man. He sent the following reply to the Poet's letter:—

Saughton Mills, April 27th, 1788.

I WAS favoured with your very kind letter of the 31st. ult., and consider myself greatly obliged to you for your attention in sending me the song to my favourite air, *Captain O'Kean*. The words delight me much—they fit the tune to a hair. I wish you would send me a verse or two more; and, if you have no objection, I would have it in the Jacobite style. Suppose it should be sung after the fatal field of Culloden, by the unfortunate Charles. Tenducci personates the lovely Mary Stuart in the song, *Queen Mary's Lamentation*. Why may not I sing in the person of her great-great-great grandson?

Any skill I have in country business you may truly command. Situation, soil, customs of countries, may vary from each other; but *Farmer Attention* is a good farmer in every

between Galloway and Ayr-shire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, "Captain O'Kean," coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it. You will see that the first part of the tune must be repeated.*

I am tolerably pleased with these verses, but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music.

I am so harassed with care and anxiety, about this farming project of mine, that my muse has degenerated into the veriest prose-wench that ever picked cinders, or followed a tinker. When I am fairly got into the routine of business, I shall trouble you with a longer epistle; perhaps with some queries respecting farming: at present, the world sits such a load on my mind that it has effaced almost every trace of the poet in me.

My very best compliments and good wishes to Mrs. Cleghorn.

R. B.

No. CVI.

TO Mr. WILLIAM DUNBAR,

EDINBURGH.

Mauchline, 7th April, 1788.

I HAVE not delayed so long to write to you, my much respected friend, because I thought no farther of my promise. I have long since given up that kind of formal correspondence, where one sits down irksomely to write a letter, because we think we are in duty bound so to do.

I have been roving over the country, as the farm I have taken is forty miles from this place, hiring servants, and preparing matters; but most of all, I am earnestly busy to bring about a revolution in my own mind. As, till within these eighteen months, I never was the wealthy master of ten guineas, my knowledge of business is to learn; add to this, my late scenes of idleness and dissipation have enervated my mind to an alarming degree. Skill in the sober science of life is my most serious and hourly study. I have dropt all conversation and all reading (prose reading), but what tends in some way or other to my serious aim. Except one worthy young fellow, I have not one single correspondent in Edinburgh. You have indeed kindly made me an offer of that kind. The world of wits, and *gens comme il faut* which I lately left, and with whom I never again will intimately mix—from that port, Sir, I expect your Gazette: what *les beaux esprits* are saying, what they are doing, and what they are singing. Any sober intelligence from my sequestered walks of life; any droll original; any passing remark, important forsooth, because it is mine; any little poetic effort, however embryoth; these, my dear Sir, are all you have to expect from me. When I talk of poetic efforts, I must have it always understood that I appeal from your wit and taste to your friendship and good nature. The first would be my favourite tribunal, where I defied censure; but the last, where I declined justice.

I have scarcely made a single distich since I saw you. When I meet with an old Scots air that has any facetious idea in its name, I have a peculiar pleasure in following out that idea for a verse or two.

I trust that this will find you in better health than I did last time I called for you. A few lines from you, directed to me at Mauchline, were it but to let me know how you are, will set my mind a good deal [at rest]. Now, never shun the idea of writing me because perhaps you may be out of humour or spirits. I could give you a hundred good consequences attending a dull letter; one, for example, and the remaining ninety-nine some other time—it will always serve to keep in countenance, my much respected Sir, your obliged friend and humble servant,†

R. B.

No. CVII.

TO Miss CHALMERS.

Mauchline, 7th April, 1788.

I AM indebted to you and Miss Nimmo for letting me know Miss Kennedy. Strange! how apt we are to indulge prejudices in our judgments of one another! Even I, who pique myself on my skill in marking characters—because I am too proud of my character as a man, to be dazzled in my judgment for glaring wealth; and too proud of my situation as a poor man to be biassed against squalid poverty—I was unacquainted with Miss K.'s very uncommon worth.

I am going on a good deal progressive in *mon grand bût*, the sober science of life. I have lately made some sacrifices, for which, were I *vivâ voce* with you to paint the situation

place. Mrs. Cleghorn joins me in best compliments. I am, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, your very sincere friend,

ROBERT CLEGHORN.

The Poet complied with his friend's request, and wrote the two remaining stanzas of his beautiful song, THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.]

* [Here the Bard gives the first two stanzas of the Chevalier's Lament.]

† [The gentleman to whom the above letter is addressed, was a writer to the Signet, in Edinburgh, with whom the Poet appears to have been on very intimate and friendly terms.]

and recount the circumstances, you would applaud me.*

R. B.

No. CVII.*

TO THE SAME.

[*No date.*]

Now for that wayward, unfortunate thing, myself. I have broke measures with Creech, and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honour that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor damned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions!

"I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to die!" I had lately "a hair-breadth 'scape in th' imminent deadly breach" of love too. Thank my stars I got off heart-whole, "waur fleyed than hurt."—Interruption.

I have this moment got a hint: I fear I am something like—undone—but I hope for the best. Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution; accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously, though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path: but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.

R. B.

No. CVIII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, 28th April, 1788.

Madam:

Your powers of reprehension must be great indeed, as I assure you they made my heart ache with penitential pangs, even though I was really not guilty. As I commence farmer at Whit-Sunday, you will easily guess I must be pretty busy; but that is not all. As I got the offer of the Excise business without solicitation, and as it costs me only six months' attendance for instructions, to entitle me to a commission—which commission lies by me, and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed—I thought five-and-thirty pounds a year was no bad *dernier ressort* for a poor poet, if fortune in her jade tricks should kick him down from the little eminence to which she has lately helped him up.

For this reason, I am at present attending these instructions to have them completed before Whit-Sunday. Still, Madam, I prepared with the sincerest pleasure to meet you at the Mount, and came to my brother's on Saturday night, to set out on Sunday; but for some nights preceding I had slept in an apartment, where the force of the winds and rains was only mitigated by being sifted through numberless apertures in the windows, walls, &c. In consequence I was on Sunday, Monday, and part of Tuesday, unable to stir out of bed, with all the miserable effects of a violent cold.

You see, Madam, the truth of the French maxim, *le vrai n'est pas toujours le vrai-semblable;* your last was so full of expostulation, and was something so like the language of an offended friend, that I began to tremble for a correspondence, which I had with grateful pleasure set down as one of the greatest enjoyments of my future life.

Your books have delighted me: Virgil, Dryden, and Tasso,† were all equally strangers to me; but of this more at large in my next.

R. B.

No. CIX.

TO Mr. JAMES SMITH,

AVON PRINTFIELD, LINLITHGOW.

Mauchline, April 28th, 1788.

Beware of your Strasburgh, my good Sir! Look on this as the opening of a correspondence, like the opening of a twenty-four gun battery!

There is no understanding a man properly without knowing something of his previous ideas (that is to say, if the man has any ideas; for I know many who, in the animal-muster, pass for men, that are the scanty masters of only one idea on any given subject, and by far the greatest part of your acquaintances and mine can barely boast of ideas, 1·25—1·5—1·75 (or some such fractional matter); so to let you a little into the secrets of my pericranium, there is, you must know, a certain clean-limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussy of your acquaintance, to whom I have lately and privately given a matrimonial title to my corpus.

* [The sacrifices to which the Poet alludes were honourable to his heart; he determined—in spite of the frowns of some, and the smiles of others—to unite his fortunes with those of Jean Armour.]

† [The Tasso with which Mrs. Dunlop indulged the Poet was the translation of Hoole: a work, in spite of the commendation of Johnson, as inferior in beauty to the version of Fairfax, as a beggar's pike-staff is to a pear-tree in full blossom.—Cunningham.]

"Bode a robe and wear it,
Bode a pock and bear it,"

says the wise old Scots adage! I hate to presage ill-luck; and as my girl has been doubly kinder to me than even the best of women usually are to their partners of our sex, in similar circumstances, I reckon on twelve times a brace of children against I celebrate my twelfth wedding-day: these twenty-four will give me twenty-four gossipings, twenty-four christenings (I mean one equal to two), and I hope, by the blessing of the God of my fathers, to make them twenty-four dutiful children to their parents, twenty-four useful members of society, and twenty-four approven servants of their God! * * *

"Light's heartsome," quo' the wife when she was stealing sheep. You see what a lamp I have hung up to lighten your paths, when you are idle enough to explore the combinations and relations of my ideas. 'Tis now as plain as a pike-staff why a twenty-four gun battery was a metaphor I could readily employ.

Now for business—I intend to present Mrs. Burns with a printed shawl, an article of which I dare say you have a variety: 'tis my first present to her since I have irrevocably called her mine, and I have a kind of whimsical wish to get her the first said present from an old and much valued friend of hers and mine, a trusty Trojan, on whose friendship I count myself possessed of as a life-rent lease.

Look on this letter as a "beginning of sorrows;" I will write you till your eyes ache reading nonsense.

Mrs. Burns ('tis only her private designation) begs her best compliments to you.

R. B.

No. CX.

TO PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.*

Mauchline, 3d May, 1788.

SIR:

I ENCLOSE you one or two more of my bagatelles. If the fervent wishes of honest gratitude have any influence with that great, unknown Being, who frames the chain of causes and events, prosperity and happiness will attend your visit to the Continent, and return you safe to your native shore.

Wherever I am, allow me, Sir, to claim it as my privilege to acquaint you with my progress in my trade of rhymes; as I am sure I could say it with truth, that, next to my little fame, and the having it in my power to make life more comfortable to those whom nature has made dear to me, I shall ever regard your countenance, your patronage, your friendly good offices, as the most valued consequence of my late success in life. R. B.

No. CXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, 4th May, 1788.

MADAM:

DRYDEN'S Virgil has delighted me. I do not know whether the critics will agree with me, but the Georgics are to me by far the best part of Virgil. It is indeed a species of writing entirely new to me; and has filled my head with a thousand fancies of emulation: but, alas! when I read the Georgics, and then survey my own powers, 'tis like the idea of a Shetland pony, drawn up by the side of a thorough-bred hunter, to start for the plate. I own I am disappointed in the Æneid. Faultless correctness may please, and does highly please, the lettered critic: but to that awful character I have not the most distant pretensions. I do not know whether I do not hazard my pretensions to be a critic of any kind when I say that I think Virgil, in many instances, a servile copier of Homer. If I had the Odyssey by me, I could parallel many passages where Virgil has evidently copied, but by no means improved, Homer. Nor can I think there is any thing of this owing to the translators; for, from every thing I have seen of Dryden, I think him, in genius and fluency of language, Pope's master. I have not perused Tasso enough to form an opinion: in some future letter, you shall have my ideas of him; though I am conscious my criticisms must be very inaccurate and imperfect, as there I have ever felt and lamented my want of learning most.†

R. B.

* [Of the accomplished Dugald Stewart, the kindness of his heart and the amenity of his manners were as conspicuous as his talents. The account of Burns, which he rendered to Currie, will always be read with interest.—vide Memoir, p. 41.

The Poet in his memoranda, thus alludes to his respected patron:—"I never spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when I had the honour of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, Professor Stewart. I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object,—he does it with such a grace. I think his character divided into ten parts, stands thus:—four parts Socrates—four parts Nathaniel—and two parts Shakspeare's Brutus."]

† [A national poem was long present to the fancy of Burns: but he seems to have hesitated between the stately versification of the English muse and the homely strains of Coila—death prevented him from deciding. It would not appear that Burns, though he loved "The Task" so much that he carried it in his pocket, had extended his reading to Cowper's Translation of Homer. The graphic beauty and natural force of that fine version would not have been lost on a lover of clear images and nervous manly language.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. CXII.

TO Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Mauchline, May 26th, 1788.

My dear Friend:

I am two kind letters in your debt, but I have been from home, and horridly busy, buying and preparing for my farming business, over and above the plague of my Excise instructions, which this week will finish.

As I flatter my wishes that I foresee many future years' correspondence between us, 'tis foolish to talk of excusing dull epistles; a dull letter may be a very kind one.—I have the pleasure to tell you that I have been extremely fortunate in all my buyings and bargainings hitherto; Mrs. Burns not excepted; which title I now avow to the world. I am truly pleased with this last affair: it has indeed added to anxieties for futurity, but it has given a stability to my mind and resolutions unknown before; and the poor girl has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to me, and has not a wish but to gratify my every idea of her deportment. I am interrupted.—Farewell! my dear Sir.

R. B.

No. CXIII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

27th May, 1788.

Madam:

I have been torturing my philosophy to no purpose, to account for that kind partiality of yours which has followed me, in my return to the shade of life, with assiduous benevolence. Often did I regret, in the fleeting hours of my late will-o'-wisp appearance, that "here I had no continuing city;" and, but for the consolation of a few solid guineas, could almost lament the time that a momentary acquaintance with wealth and splendour put me so much out of conceit with the sworn companions of my road through life—insignificance and poverty.

There are few circumstances relating to the unequal distribution of the good things of this life that give me more vexation (I mean in what I see around me) than the importance the opulent bestow on their trifling family affairs, compared with the very same things on the contracted scale of a cottage. Last afternoon I had the honour to spend an hour or two at a good woman's fire-side, where the planks that composed the floor were decorated with a splendid carpet, and the gay table sparkled with silver and china. 'Tis now about term-day,* and there has been a revolution among those creatures, who though in appearance partakers, and equally noble partakers, of the same nature with Madame, are from time to time—their nerves, their sinews, their health, strength, wisdom, experience, genius, time, nay a good part of their very thoughts—sold for months and years, not only to the necessities, the conveniences, but the caprices of the important few. We talked of the insignificant creatures; nay, notwithstanding their general stupidity and rascality, did some of the poor devils the honour to commend them. But light be the turf upon his breast who taught, "Reverence thyself!" We looked down on the unpolished wretches, their impertinent wives and clouterly brats, as the lordly bull does on the little dirty ant-hill, whose puny inhabitants he crushes in the carelessness of his ramble, or tosses in the air in the wantonness of his pride.

R. B.

* [The hiring-season naturally introduced the conversation to which the Poet indignantly alludes. In Scotland, servants are hired half-yearly from term to term, or, in other words, from Whit-Sunday to Martinmas, and from Martinmas to Whit-Sunday. In England, servants are engaged by the month, and are more at the mercy of the changeable and the capricious.]

No. CXIV.

TO THE SAME.

AT MR. DUNLOP'S, HADDINGTON.

Ellisland, 13th June, 1788.

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to my friend it turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags, at each remove, a lengthen'd chain."

Goldsmith.

This is the second day, my honoured friend, that I have been on my farm. A solitary inmate of an old, smoky spence; far from every object I love, or by whom I am beloved; nor any acquaintance older than yesterday, except Jenny Geddes, the old mare I ride on; while uncouth cares and novel plans hourly insult my awkward ignorance and bashful inexperience. There is a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care; consequently the dreary objects seem larger than the life. Extreme sensibility, irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind.

"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his *single* woes?" &c.

Your surmise, Madam, is just; I am indeed a husband.

* * * *

To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger. My preservative from the first is the

most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me: my antidote against the last is my long and deep-rooted affection for her.

In housewife matters, of aptness to learn and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress: and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy and other rural business.*

The muses must not be offended when I tell them the concerns of my wife and family will, in my mind, always take the *pas;* but I assure them their ladyships will ever come next in place.

You are right that a bachelor state would have ensured me more friends; but, from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number.

I found a once much-loved and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements; but I enabled her to *purchase* a shelter;—there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery.

The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a penny pay-wedding.

R. B.

No. CXV.

TO Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, June 14th, 1788.

This is now the third day, my dearest Sir, that I have sojourned in these regions; and during these three days you have occupied more of my thoughts than in three weeks preceding: in Ayr-shire I have several variations of friendship's compass—here it points invariably to the pole. My farm gives me a good many uncouth cares and anxieties, but I hate the language of complaint. Job, or some one of his friends, says well—"Why should a living man complain?"

I have lately been much mortified with contemplating an unlucky imperfection in the very framing and construction of my soul; namely, a blundering inaccuracy of her olfactory organs in hitting the scent of craft or design in my fellow-creatures. I do not mean any compliment to my ingenuousness, or to hint that the defect is in consequence of the unsuspicious simplicity of conscious truth and honour: I take it to be, in some way or other, an imperfection in the mental sight; or, metaphor apart, some modification of dullness. In two or three small instances lately, I have been most shamefully out.

I have all along, hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms among the light-horse—the piquet-guards of fancy; a kind of hussars and Highlanders of the brain; but I am firmly resolved to sell out of these giddy battalions, who have no ideas of a battle but fighting the foe, or of a siege but storming the town. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance.

What books are you reading, or what is the subject of your thoughts, besides the great studies of your profession? You said something about religion in your last. I don't exactly remember what it was, as the letter is in Ayr-shire; but I thought it not only prettily said, but nobly thought. You will make a noble fellow if once you were married. I make no reservation of your being well-married: you have so much sense, and knowledge of human nature, that, though you may not realize perhaps the ideas of romance, yet you will never be ill-married.

Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting provision for a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness. As it is, I look to the Excise scheme as a certainty of maintenance; a maintenance!—luxury to what either Mrs. Burns or I were born to.

Adieu!—R. B.

No. CXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Mauchline, 23rd June, 1788.

This letter, my dear Sir, is only a business scrap. Mr. Miers, profile painter in your town, has executed a profile of Dr. Blacklock for me: do me the favour to call for it, and sit to him yourself for me, which put in the same size as the doctor's. The account of both profiles will

* [It was one of the pleasing theories of the Poet, in the pursuit of independence, that while he watched the public revenue as a gauger, his wife would superintend the whole system of in-door and out-door economy of a farmer's establishment, and that between them money would come pouring in. To insure this, he began a war against the nature of the soil of Ellisland, by trying to turn it into pasturage: and he caused his wife to be instructed in the business of the dairy, with the hope of making cheese rivalling the far-famed Dunlop; but

"The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft agley."—Cunningham.]

be fifteen shillings, which I have given to James Connel, our Mauchline carrier, to pay you when you give him the parcel. You must not, my friend, refuse to sit. The time is short; when I sat to Mr. Miers, I am sure he did not exceed two minutes. I propose hanging Lord Glencairn, the Doctor, and you in trio over my new chimney-piece that is to be.*

Adieu.—R. B.

No. CXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Ellisland, June 30th, 1788.

My dear Sir:

I just now received your brief epistle; and, to take vengeance on your laziness, I have, you see, taken a long sheet of writing-paper, and have begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vexed at that affair of the * * *, but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late master and friend's death.† I am concerned for the old fellow's exit, only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect—for an old man's dying, except he have been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment to the world. Man is naturally a kind, benevolent animal, but he is dropped into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whore-son, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food; that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself. You have been imposed upon in paying Mr. Miers for the profile of a Mr. H. I did not mention it in my letter to you, nor did I ever give Mr. Miers any such order. I have no objection to lose the money, but I will not have any such profile in my possession.

I desired the carrier to pay you, but as I mentioned only 15*s.* to him, I will rather enclose you a guinea note. I have it not, indeed, to spare here, as I am only a sojourner in a strange land in this place; but in a day or two I return to Mauchline, and there I have the bank-notes through the house like salt permits.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes, by his silly, garrulous pruriency. I know it has been a fault of my own, too; but from this moment I abjure it as I would the service of hell! Your poets, spendthrifts, and other fools of that kidney, pretend, forsooth, to crack their jokes on prudence; but 'tis a squalid vagabond, glorying in his rags. Still, imprudence respecting money matters is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice, in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation, if you have not met, and often met, with the same disingenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity, and disintegritive depravity of principle, in the hackneyed victims of profusion, as in the unfeeling children of parsimony. I have every possible reverence for the much talked-of world beyond the grave, and I wish that which piety believes, and virtue deserves, may be all matter of fact. But in things belonging to, and terminating in this present scene of existence, man has serious and interesting business on hand. Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome in the distinguished elevation of respect, or shrink from contempt in the abject corner of insignificance; whether he shall wanton under the tropic of plenty, at least enjoy himself in the comfortable latitudes of easy convenience, or starve in the arctic circle of dreary poverty; whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of regret and remorse—these are alternatives of the last moment.

You see how I preach. You used occasionally to sermonize too; I wish you would, in charity, favour me with a sheet full in your own way. I admire the close of a letter Lord Bolingbroke wrote to Dean Swift:—"Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely: make an effort to love me with all mine!" Humble servant, and all that trumpery, is now such a prostituted business that honest friendship, in her sincere way, must have recourse to her primitive, simple,—farewell!

R. B.

No. CXVIII.

TO Mr. GEORGE LOCKHART,

MERCHANT, GLASGOW.

Mauchline, 18th July, 1788.

My dear Sir:

I am just going for Nithsdale, else I would

* [The kindness of Mr. Field, profilist, Strand, has not only indulged me with a look at the original outline of the Poet's face, but has put me in possession of a capital copy. It is the size of life: the contour is fine—nay, noble: the nose is a little blunt at the point: the mouth is full and well-shaped, the forehead high, and the whole air that of freedom and genius. It is one of thirty thousand likenesses taken by the same skilful hand.—Cunningham.]

† [Mr. Samuel Mitchelson, W. S. He died on the 21st of June previous.]

certainly have transcribed some of my rhyming things for you. The Misses Baillie I have seen in Edinburgh. "Fair and lovely are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Who would not praise thee for these thy gifts in thy goodness to the sons of men!" It needed not your fine taste to admire them. I declare, one day I had the honour of dining at Mr. Baillie's, I was almost in the predicament of the children of Israel, when they could not look on Moses' face for the glory that shone in it when he descended from Mount Sinai.

I did once write a poetic address from the Falls of Bruar to his Grace of Athole, when I was in the Highlands. When you return to Scotland, let me know, and I will send such of my pieces as please myself best. I return to Mauchline in about ten days.

My compliments to Mr. Purden. I am in truth, but at present in haste,

Yours,—R. B.

No. CXIX.

TO Mr. PETER HILL.

My dear Hill:

I shall say nothing to your mad present—you have so long and often been of important service to me, and I suppose you mean to go on conferring obligations until I shall not be able to lift up my face before you. In the mean time as Sir Roger de Coverley, because it happened to be a cold day in which he made his will, ordered his servants great coats for mourning, so, because I have been this week plagued with an indigestion, I have sent you by the carrier a fine old ewe-milk cheese.*

Indigestion is the devil: nay, 'tis the devil and all. It besets a man in every one of his senses. I lose my appetite at the sight of successful knavery, and sicken to loathing at the noise and nonsense of self-important folly. When the hollow-hearted wretch takes me by the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner; the proud man's wine so offends my palate that it chokes me in the gullet; and the *pulvilised*, feathered, pert coxcomb, is so disgustful in my nostril that my stomach turns.

If ever you have any of these disagreeable sensations, let me prescribe for you patience and a bit of my cheese. I know that you are no niggard of good things among your friends, and some of them are in much need of a slice. There, in my eyes, is our friend Smellie; a man positively of the first abilities and greatest strength of mind, as well as one of the best hearts and keenest wits that I have ever met with; when you see him, as, alas! he too is smarting at the pinch of distressful circumstances, aggravated by the sneer of contumelious greatness—a bit of my cheese alone will not cure him, but if you add a tankard of brown stout, and superadd a magnum of right Oporto, you will see his sorrows vanish like the morning mist before the summer sun.

Candlish, the earliest friend, except my only brother, that I have on earth, and one of the worthiest fellows that ever any man called by the name of friend, if a luncheon of my cheese would help to rid him of some of his superabundant modesty, you would do well to give it him.

David,† with his *Courant*, comes, too, across my recollection, and I beg you will help him largely from the said ewe-milk cheese, to enable him to digest those bedaubing paragraphs with which he is eternally larding the lean characters of certain great men in a certain great town. I grant you the periods are very well turned; so, a fresh egg is a very good thing, but when thrown at a man in a pillory, it does not at all improve his figure, not to mention the irreparable loss of the egg.

My facetious friend Dunbar I would wish also to be a partaker: not to digest his spleen, for that he laughs off, but to digest his last night's wine at the last field-day of the Crochallan corps.‡

Among our common friends I must not forget one of the dearest of them—Cunningham. The brutality, insolence, and selfishness of a world unworthy of having such a fellow as he is in it, I know, sticks in his stomach, and if you can help him to anything that will make him a little easier on that score, it will be very obliging.

As to honest John Somerville, he is such a contented, happy man, that I know not what can annoy him, except, perhaps, he may not have got the better of a parcel of modest anecdotes which a certain poet gave him one night at supper, the last time the said poet was in town.

Though I have mentioned so many men of law, I shall have nothing to do with them professedly—the faculty are beyond my prescription. As to their clients that is another thing; God knows they have much to digest!

The clergy I pass by; their profundity of erudition, and their liberality of sentiment; their total want of pride, and their detestation of hypocrisy, are so proverbially notorious as to place them far, far above either my praise or censure.

I was going to mention a man of worth,

* [Peter Hill was a bookseller, and the present to which the Poet alludes was some valuable books. Burns felt unwilling to lie under obligations: and hence his return in "a fine old ewe-milk cheese," a savoury morsel that no doubt smacked of the ewe-bughts.]

† Mr. David Ramsay, printer of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*.

‡ A club of choice spirits, already alluded to.

whom I have the honour to call friend, the Laird of Craigdarroch; but I have spoken to the landlord of the King's-Arms-inn here, to have at the next county meeting a large ewe-milk cheese on the table, for the benefit of the Dumfries-shire Whigs, to enable them to digest the Duke of Queensberry's late political conduct.

I have just this moment an opportunity of a private hand to Edinburgh, as perhaps you would not digest double postage.

R. B.

No. CXX.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq.,

OF FINTRAY.

SIR:

WHEN I had the honour of being introduced to you at Athole-house, I did not think so soon of asking a favour of you. When Lear, in Shakspeare, asked Old Kent, why he wished to be in his service, he answers, "Because you have that in your face which I would fain call master." For some such reason, Sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of Excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I gave in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronizing friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but with any thing like business, except manual labour, I am totally unacquainted.

I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life, in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last, and often best, friend, rescued him.*

I know, Sir, that to need your goodness is to have a claim on it; may I, therefore, beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division; where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation.

R. B.

No. CXXI.

TO WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK.

Ellisland, August, 1788.

I HAVE not room, my dear friend, to answer all the particulars of your last kind letter. I shall be in Edinburgh on some business very soon; and, as I shall be two days, or perhaps three, in town, we shall discuss matters *viva voce*. My knee, I believe, will never be entirely well; and an unlucky fall this winter has made it still worse. I well remember the circumstance you allude to, respecting Creech's opinion of Mr. Nicol; but, as the first gentleman owes me still about fifty pounds, I dare not meddle in the affair.

It gave me a very heavy heart to read such accounts of the consequence of your quarrel with that puritanic, rotten-hearted, hell-commissioned scoundrel, A———. If, notwithstanding your unprecedented industry in public, and your irreproachable conduct in private life, he still has you so much in his power, what ruin may he not bring on some others I could name?

Many and happy returns of seasons to you, with your dearest and worthiest friend, and the lovely little pledge of your happy union. May the great Author of life, and of every enjoyment that can render life delightful, make her that comfortable blessing to you both, which you so ardently wish for, and which, allow me to say, you so well deserve! Glance over the foregoing verses, and let me have your blots! †

Adieu.

R. B.

No. CXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, August 2nd, 1788.

HONOURED MADAM:

YOUR kind letter welcomed me, yesternight, to Ayr-shire. I am, indeed, seriously angry with you at the quantum of your luckpenny; but, vexed and hurt as I was, I could not help laughing very heartily at the noble lord's apology for the missed napkin.

I would write you from Nithsdale, and give you my direction there, but I have scarce an opportunity of calling at a post-office once in a fortnight. I am six miles from Dumfries, am

* [The filial and fraternal claims to which this letter refers were as follows. Two hundred pounds lent to his brother Gilbert, to enable him to fight out the remainder of the lease of Mossgiel—and a considerable sum given to his mother for her own contingencies. Burns was ever a dutiful son and a kind brother.]

† [The verses inclosed were the lines written in Friars'-Carse Hermitage;—"the first fruits," says the Poet elsewhere, "of my intercourse with the Nithsdale Muse." Some of his best poems were written on the Banks of the Nith; viz., the "Lines on Friars'-Carse Hermitage;" the verses "On Captain Grose's Peregrinations;" "The Whistle;" the "Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson," and "Tam o' Shanter," with many exquisite songs. The walk in which the Poet loved to muse is still shewn and reverenced at Ellisland.]

scarcely ever in it myself, and, as yet, have little acquaintance in the neighbourhood. Besides, I am now very busy on my farm, building a dwelling-house; as at present I am almost an evangelical man in Nithsdale, for I have scarce "where to lay my head."

There are some passages in your last that brought tears in my eyes. "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith." The repository of these "sorrows of the heart" is a kind of *sanctum sanctorum*: and 'tis only a chosen friend, and that, too, at particular, sacred times, who dares enter into them:—

> 'Heaven oft tears the bosom-chords
> That nature finest strung.'

You will excuse this quotation for the sake of the author. Instead of entering on this subject farther, I shall transcribe you a few lines I wrote in a hermitage, belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are almost the only favours the muses have conferred on me in that country.—[See Lines written in Friars-Carse Hermitage, page 278.]

Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following were the production of yesterday as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my Excise hopes depend, Mr. Graham of Fintray, one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen, not only of this country, but, I will dare to say it, of this age. The following are just the first crude thoughts "unhousel'd, unanointed, unanneal'd:"—*

* * * *

Here the muse left me. I am astonished at what you tell me of Anthony's writing me. I never received it. Poor fellow! you vex me much by telling me that he is unfortunate. I shall be in Ayr-shire in ten days from this date. I have just room for an old Roman farewell.

R. B.

No. CXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Mauchline, August 10th, 1788.

MY MUCH HONOURED FRIEND:

YOURS of the 24th June is before me. I found it, as well as another valued friend—my wife—waiting to welcome me to Ayr-shire: I met both with the sincerest pleasure.

When I write you, Madam, I do not sit down to answer every paragraph of yours, by echoing every sentiment, like the faithful Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, answering a speech from the best of kings! I express myself in the fulness of my heart, and may, perhaps, be guilty of neglecting some of your kind inquiries; but not, from your very odd reason, that I do not read your letters. All your epistles for several months have cost me nothing, except a swelling throb of gratitude, or a deep-felt sentiment of veneration.

When Mrs. Burns, Madam, first found herself "as women wish to be who love their lords," as I loved her nearly to distraction, we took steps for a private marriage. Her parents got the hint; and not only forbade me her company and their house, but, on my rumoured West Indian voyage, got a warrant to put me in jail, till I should find security in my about-to-be paternal relation. You know my lucky reverse of fortune. On my *eclatant* return to Mauchline, I was made very welcome to visit my girl. The usual consequences began to betray her; and, as I was at that time laid up a cripple in Edinburgh, she was turned, literally turned out of doors, and I wrote to a friend to shelter her till my return, when our marriage was declared. Her happiness or misery were in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?

I can easily fancy a more agreeable companion for my journey of life; but, upon my honour, I have never seen the individual instance.

Circumstanced as I am, I could never have got a female partner for life who could have entered into my favourite studies, relished my favourite authors, &c., without probably entailing on me at the same time expensive living, fantastic caprice, perhaps apish affectation, with all the other blessed boarding-school acquirements, which *(pardonnez moi, Madame,)* are sometimes to be found among females of the upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the misses of the would-be gentry.

I like your way in your church-yard lucubrations. Thoughts that are the spontaneous result of accidental situations, either respecting health, place, or company, have often a strength and always an originality that would in vain be looked for in fancied circumstances and studied paragraphs. For me, I have often thought of keeping a letter, in progression by me, to send you when the sheet was written out. Now I talk of sheets, I must tell you, my reason for writing to you on paper of this kind is my pruriency of writing to you at large. A page of post is on such a dis-social, narrow-minded scale, that I cannot abide it; and double letters, at least in my miscellaneous reverie manner, are a monstrous tax in a close correspondence.* R. B.

* See "First Epistle to Robert Graham," p. 281, commencing "Pity the tuneful muses' hapless strain."

* [In Burns's own Memoranda are these words: I am more and more pleased with the step I took respecting my Jean.

No. CXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Ellisland, 16th August, 1788.

I AM in a fine disposition, my honoured friend, to send you an elegiac epistle; and want only genius to make it quite Shenstonian:

"Why droops my heart with fancied woes forlorn?
Why sinks my soul beneath each wintry sky?"

My increasing cares in this, as yet, strange country—gloomy conjectures in the dark vista of futurity—consciousness of my own inability for the struggle of the world—my broadened mark to misfortune in a wife and children;—I could indulge these reflections, till my humour should ferment into the most acid chagrin, that would corrode the very thread of life.

To counterwork these baneful feelings, I have sat down to write to you; as I declare upon my soul I always find that the most sovereign balm for my wounded spirit.

I was yesterday at Mr. Miller's to dinner, for the first time. My reception was quite to my mind: from the lady of the house quite flattering. She sometimes hits on a couplet or two, *impromptu*. She repeated one or two to the admiration of all present. My suffrage, as a professional man, was expected: I for once went agonizing over the belly of my conscience. Pardon me, ye, my adored household gods, independence of spirit, and integrity of soul! In the course of conversation, "Johnson's Musical Museum," a collection of Scottish songs with the music, was talked of. We got a song on the harpsichord, beginning,

"Raving winds around her blowing."*

The air was much admired: the lady of the house asked me whose were the words. "Mine, Madam—they are indeed my very best verses;" she took not the smallest notice of them! The old Scottish proverb says well, "king's chaff is better than ither folks' corn." I was going to make a New Testament quotation about "casting pearls," but that would be too virulent, for the lady is actually a woman of sense and taste.

After all that has been said on the other side of the question, man is by no means a happy creature, I do not speak of the selected few, favoured by partial heaven, whose souls are tuned to gladness amid riches and honours, and prudence and wisdom. I speak of the neglected many, whose nerves, whose sinews, whose days are sold to the minions of fortune.

If I thought you had never seen it, I would transcribe for you a stanza of an old Scottish ballad, called, "The Life and Age of Man;" beginning thus:

"'Twas in the sixteenth hunder year
Of God and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testifie."

I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived awhile in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of "The Life and Age of Man."

It is this way of thinking, it is these melancholy truths, that make religion so precious to the poor, miserable children of men.—If it is a mere phantom, existing only in the heated imagination of enthusiasm,

"What truth on earth so precious as the lie!"

My idle reasonings sometimes make me a little sceptical, but the necessities of my heart always give the cold philosophisings the lie. Who looks for the heart weaned from earth; the soul affianced to her God; the correspondence fixed with heaven; the pious supplication and devout thanksgiving, constant as the vicissitudes of even and morn; who thinks to meet with these in the Court, the palace, in the glare of public life? No: to find them in their precious importance and divine efficacy, we must search among the obscure recesses of disappointment, affliction, poverty, and distress.

I am sure, dear Madam, you are now more than pleased with the length of my letters. I return to Ayr-shire the middle of next week: and it quickens my pace to think that there will be a letter from you waiting me there. I must be here again very soon for my harvest.

R. B.

Two things, from my happy experience, I set down as apophthegms in life. A wife's head is immaterial compared with her heart; and Virtue's (for wisdom, what poet pretends to it?) "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

It is really amusing to observe how anxious the poet has been to reconcile himself and his friends to his marrying a woman of homely understanding and rustic manners. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, it drives him into a frantic tirade against all those refinements which constitute the lady—refinements of which he had practically expressed his admiration by his relish of the society of Miss Chalmers, Mrs. M'Lehose, Miss Hamilton, Mrs. Dunlop, and many others. His whole conduct on this point only manifests that when, after some experience of Edinburgh society, he had to content himself with his village mistress, he did not make up his mind to the union without some degree of soreness, and that the cause of this soreness was his preference of those very elegancies in the female character which he affected to condemn. Under no other feeling, perhaps, could so sensible a man as Burns have expressed disregard for so important a matter as the intellect of the woman who was to be his wife and the mother of his children.—CHAMBERS.]

* [See page 371.]

No. CXXV.

TO Mr. BEUGO,

ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, 9th Sept. 1788.

My dear Sir:

There is not in Edinburgh above the number of the graces whose letters would have given me so much pleasure as yours of the 3d instant, which only reached me yesternight.

I am here on my farm, busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country, in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose, they only know in graces, prayers, &c., and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs—by the ell! As for the muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet. For my old capricious, but good-natured, hussy of a muse—

> "By banks of Nith I sat and wept
> When Coila I thought on,
> In midst thereof I hung my harp
> The willow trees upon."

I am generally about half my time in Ayr-shire with my "darling Jean," and then I, at lucid intervals, throw my horny fist across my becobwebbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning-wheel.

I will send the "Fortunate Shepherdess," as soon as I return to Ayr-shire, for there I keep it with other precious treasure. I shall send it by a careful hand, as I would not for any thing it should be mislaid or lost. I do not wish to serve you from any benevolence, or other grave Christian virtue; 'tis purely a selfish gratification of my own feelings whenever I think of you.

If your better functions would give you leisure to write me, I should be extremely happy; that is to say, if you neither keep nor look for a regular correspondence. I hate the idea of being obliged to write a letter. I sometimes write a friend twice a week, at other times once a quarter.

I am exceedingly pleased with your fancy in making the author you mention place a map of Iceland instead of his portrait before his works: 'twas a glorious idea.

Could you conveniently do me one thing?—whenever you finish any head I should like to have a proof copy of it. I might tell you a long story about your fine genius; but, as what every body knows cannot have escaped you, I shall not say one syllable about it.

R. B.

No. CXXVI.

TO Miss CHALMERS,

EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, Sept. 16th, 1788.

Where are you? and how are you? and is Lady Mackenzie recovering her health? for I have had but one solitary letter from you. I will not think you have forgot me, Madam; and, for my part—

> "When thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
> Skill part from my right hand!"

"My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea." I do not make my progress among mankind as a bowl does among its fellows—rolling through the crowd without bearing away any mark or impression, except where they hit in hostile collision.

I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and as you and your sister once did me the honour of interesting yourselves much *à l'egard de moi*, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness. I can truly say that, all the exterior of life apart, I never saw two, whose esteem flattered the nobler feelings of my soul—I will not say more, but so much, as Lady Mackenzie and Miss Chalmers. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest of human kind—unfortunate even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days than I can do with almost anybody I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child! If ever you honoured me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more desert. I am secure against that crushing grip of iron poverty, which, alas! is less or more fatal to the native worth and purity of, I fear, the noblest souls; and a late important step in my life has kindly taken me out of the way of those ungrateful iniquities, which, however overlooked in fashionable license, or varnished in fashionable phrase, are indeed but lighter and deeper shades of villany.

Shortly after my last return to Ayr-shire, I married "my Jean." This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance, perhaps; but I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit. Nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation: and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest

constitution, and the kindest heart in the county. Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit, et le plus honnête homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever in her life, except the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse. I must except also from this last a certain late publication of Scots poems, which she has perused very devoutly; and all the ballads in the country, as she has (O the partial lover! you will cry) the finest "wood note wild" I ever heard. I am the more particular in this lady's character, as I know she will henceforth have the honour of a share in your best wishes. She is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house; for this hovel that I shelter in, while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to expect, but I believe, in time, it may be a saving bargain. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *éclat*, and bind every day after my reapers.

To save me from that horrid situation of at any time going down, in a losing bargain of a farm, to misery, I have taken my Excise instructions, and have my commission in my pocket for any emergency of fortune. If I could set all before your view, whatever disrespect you, in common with the world, have for this business, I know you would approve of my idea.

I will make no apology, dear Madam, for this egotistic detail; I know you and your sister will be interested in every circumstance of it. What signify the silly, idle gewgaws of wealth, or the ideal trumpery of greatness! When fellow-partakers of the same nature fear the same God, have the same benevolence of heart, the same nobleness of soul, the same detestation at every thing dishonest, and the same scorn at every thing unworthy—if they are not in the dependence of absolute beggary, in the name of common sense are they not EQUALS? And if the bias, the instinctive bias of their souls run the same way, may they not be FRIENDS?

When I may have an opportunity of sending you this, Heaven only knows. Shenstone says, "When one is confined idle within doors by bad weather, the best antidote against *ennui* is to read the letters of, or write to, one's friends;" in that case then, if the weather continues thus, I may scrawl you half a quire.

I very lately—to wit, since harvest began—wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the manner, of Pope's Moral Epistles. It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my Muse's pinion in that way. I will send you a copy of it, when once I have heard from you. I have likewise been laying the foundation of some pretty large poetic works: how the superstructure will come on, I leave to that great maker and marrer of projects—TIME. Johnson's collection of Scots songs is going on in the third volume; and, of consequence, finds me a consumpt for a great deal of idle metre. One of the most tolerable things I have done in that way is two stanzas I made to an air a musical gentleman of my acquaintance composed for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the seventh of November. Take it as follows:—

"The day returns—my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet," &c. See p. 378.

I shall give over this letter for shame. If I should be seized with a scribbling fit, before this goes away, I shall make it another letter; and then you may allow your patience a week's respite between the two. I have not room for more than the old, kind, hearty farewell!

To make some amends, *mes chères Mesdames*, for dragging you on to this second sheet; and to relieve a little the tiresomeness of my unstudied and uncorrectible prose, I shall transcribe you some of my late poetic bagatelles; though I have, these eight or ten months, done very little that way. One day, in a hermitage on the banks of Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows; supposing myself the sequestered, venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion.

LINES WRITTEN IN FRIARS-CARSE HERMITAGE.

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed, &c. See p. 278.

R. B.

No. CXXVII.

TO MR. MORISON,

MAUCHLINE.*

Ellisland, September 22, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

NECESSITY obliges me to go into my new house even before it be plastered. I will inha-

* [Mr. Morison was a Mauchline cabinet-maker, an excellent workman, and a worthy intelligent person. The Poet, with a feeling for which no one but a worldling will blame him, ordered his furniture to be made in his native place; and Morison made it neat and serviceable. The eight-day clock, which went from Mossgiel to Ellisland, is also of Mauchline manufacture; it was sold at the death of the Poet's widow for five-and-thirty pounds, and is now in London.]

bit the one end until the other is finished. About three weeks more, I think, will at farthest be my time, beyond which I cannot stay in this present house. If ever you wished to deserve the blessing of him that was ready to perish; if ever you were in a situation that a little kindness would have rescued you from many evils; if ever you hope to find rest in future states of untried being—get these matters of mine ready. My servant will be out in the beginning of next week for the clock. My compliments to Mrs. Morison.

I am, after all my tribulation,
Dear Sir, yours,—R. B.

No. CXXVIII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP,

OF DUNLOP.

Mauchline, 27th. Sept. 1788.

I HAVE received twins, dear madam, more than once; but scarcely ever with more pleasure than when I received yours of the 12th instant. To make myself understood; I had wrote to Mr. Graham, enclosing my poem addressed to him, and the same post which favoured me with yours brought me an answer from him. It was dated the very day he had received mine; and I am quite at a loss to say whether it was most polite or kind.

Your criticisms, my honoured benefactress, are truly the work of a friend. They are not the blasting depredations of a canker-toothed, caterpillar critic; nor are they the fair statement of cold impartiality, balancing with unfeeling exactitude the *pro* and *con* of an author's merits; they are the judicious observations of animated friendship, selecting the beauties of the piece.* I have just arrived from Nithsdale, and will be here a fortnight. I was on horseback this morning by three o'clock; for between my wife and my farm is just forty-six miles. As I jogged on in the dark, I was taken with a poetic fit, as follows:

"Mrs. Ferguson of Craigdarroch's lamentation for the death of her son; an uncommonly promising youth of eighteen or nineteen years of age.

"Fate gave the word—the arrow sped,
And pierced my darling's heart, &c."†

You will not send me your poetic rambles, but, you see, I am no niggard of mine. I am sure your impromptus give me double pleasure; what falls from your pen can neither be unentertaining in itself, nor indifferent to me.

The one fault you found is just; but I cannot please myself in an emendation.

What a life of solicitude is the life of a parent! You interested me much in your young couple.

I would not take my folio paper for this epistle, and now I repent it. I am so jaded with my dirty long journey that I was afraid to drawl into the essence of dulness with any thing larger than a quarto, and so I must leave out another rhyme of this morning's manufacture.

I will pay the sapientipotent George, most cheerfully, to hear from you ere I leave Ayrshire.

R. B.

No. CXXIX.

TO Mr. PETER HILL.

Mauchline, 1st October, 1788.

I HAVE been here in this country about three days, and all that time my chief reading has been the "Address to Lochlomond" you were so obliging as to send to me.‡ Were I impannelled one of the author's jury, to determine his criminality respecting the sin of poesy, my verdict should be "guilty! A poet of nature's making!" It is an excellent method for improvement, and what I believe every poet does, to place some favourite classic author in his own walks of study and composition, before him, as a model. Though your author had not mentioned the name, I could have, at half a glance, guessed his model to be Thomson. Will my brother-poet forgive me, if I venture to hint that his imitation of that immortal bard is in two or three places rather more servile than such a genius as his required?—*e. g.*

"To soothe the maddening passions all to peace."
ADDRESS.

"To soothe the throbbing passions into peace."
THOMSON.

I think the "Address" is in simplicity, harmony, and elegance of versification, fully equal to the "Seasons." Like Thomson, too, he has looked into nature for himself: you meet with no copied description. One particular criticism I made at first reading; in no one instance has he said too much. He never flags in his progress, but, like a true poet of nature's making, kindles in his course. His beginning is simple

* [Burns entertained no great respect for what may be styled technical criticism. He loved the man who judged of poetical compositions from the heart—but looked with an evil eye upon those who decided by the cold decisions of the head.]

† [See page 280.]

‡ [The poem entitled "An Address to Loch-Lomond," is said to be written by a gentleman, now one of the masters of the high-school at Edinburgh, and the same who translated the beautiful story of "The Paria," as published in the *Bee* of Dr. Anderson.—CURRIE.]

and modest, as if distrustful of the strength of his pinion; only, I do not altogether like—

——————————"Truth,
The soul of every song that's nobly great."

Fiction is the soul of many a song that is nobly great. Perhaps I am wrong: this may be but a prose criticism. Is not the phrase, in line 7, page 6, "Great lake," too much vulgarized by every-day language for so sublime a poem?

"Great mass of waters, theme for nobler song,"

is perhaps no emendation. His enumeration of a comparison with other lakes is at once harmonious and poetic. Every reader's ideas must sweep the

"Winding margin of a hundred miles."

The perspective that follows mountains blue —the imprisoned billows beating in vain—the wooded isles—the digression on the yew-tree—"Benlomond's lofty, cloud-envelop'd head," &c., are beautiful. A thunder-storm is a subject which has been often tried, yet our poet in his grand picture has interjected a circumstance, so far as I know, entirely original:—

——————————"the gloom
Deep seam'd with frequent streaks of moving fire."

In his preface to the Storm, "the glens how dark between," is noble highland landscape! The "rain ploughing the red mould," too, is beautifully fancied. "Ben-lomond's lofty, pathless top," is a good expression; and the surrounding view from it is truly great: the

————"silver mist,
Beneath the beaming sun,"

is well described; and here he has contrived to enliven his poem with a little of that passion which bids fair, I think, to usurp the modern muses altogether. I know not how far this episode is a beauty upon the whole, but the swain's wish to carry "some faint idea of the vision bright," to entertain her "partial listening ear," is a pretty thought. But in my opinion the most beautiful passages in the whole poem are the fowls crowding, in wintry frosts, to Lochlomond's "hospitable flood;" their wheeling round, their lighting, mixing, diving, &c.; and the glorious description of the sportsman. This last is equal to any thing in the "Seasons." The idea of "the floating tribes distant seen, far glistering to the moon," provoking his eye as he is obliged to leave them, is a noble ray of poetic genius. "The howling winds," the "hideous roar" of "the white cascades," are all in the same style.

I forget that while I am thus holding forth with the heedless warmth of an enthusiast, I am perhaps tiring you with nonsense. I must, however, mention that the last verse of the sixteenth page is one of the most elegant compliments I have ever seen. I must likewise notice that beautiful paragraph beginning "The gleaming lake," &c. I dare not go into the particular beauties of the last two paragraphs, but they are admirably fine, and truly Ossianic.

I must beg your pardon for this lengthened scrawl. I had no idea of it when I began—I should like to know who the author is; but, whoever he be, please present him with my grateful thanks for the entertainment he has afforded me.

A friend of mine desired me to commission for him two books, "Letters on the Religion essential to Man," a book you sent me before; and "The World Unmasked, or the Philosopher the greatest Cheat." Send me them by the first opportunity. The Bible you sent me is truly elegant; I only wish it had been in two volumes.

R. B.

No. CXXX.

TO THE

EDITOR OF "THE STAR."*

November 8th, 1788.

SIR:

NOTWITHSTANDING the opprobrious epithets with which some of our philosophers and gloomy sectarians have branded our nature—the principle of universal selfishness, the proneness to all evil, they have given us—still, the detestation in which inhumanity to the distressed, or insolence to the fallen, are held by all mankind, shews that they are not natives of the human heart. Even the unhappy partner of our kind, who is undone—the bitter consequence of his follies or his crimes—who but sympathizes with the miseries of this ruined profligate brother? We forget the injuries, and feel for the man.

I went, last Wednesday, to my parish church, most cordially to join in grateful acknowledgment to the AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD, for the consequent blessings of the glorious revolution. To that auspicious event we owe no less than our liberties, civil and religious; to it we are likewise indebted for the present Royal Family, the ruling features of whose administration have

* [One of the conductors of the "London Star" at that period, and for many years afterwards, was John Mayne, a warm-hearted Dumfriesian, and author of "Logan Braes," and a lyric more touching still, "The Muffled Drum." His poem of "Glasgow" has been several times reprinted, and his "Siller Gun" appeared in a fourth edition in 1835, with notes by the Author. This amiable and worthy man died in 1836. It is, perhaps, one of the best of our local poems, full of character and manners—joyous humour and rustic gaiety.]

ever been mildness to the subject, and tenderness of his rights.*

Bred and educated in revolution principles, the principles of reason and common sense, it could not be any silly political prejudice which made my heart revolt at the harsh, abusive manner in which the reverend gentleman† mentioned the House of Stuart, and which, I am afraid, was too much the language of the day. We may rejoice sufficiently in our deliverance from past evils, without cruelly raking up the ashes of those whose misfortune it was, perhaps, as much as their crime, to be the authors of those evils; and we may bless GOD for all his goodness to us as a nation, without, at the same time, cursing a few ruined, powerless exiles, who only harboured ideas, and made attempts, that most of us would have done, had we been in their situation.

"The bloody and tyrannical House of Stuart" may be said with propriety and justice, when compared with the present royal family, and the sentiments of our days; but is there no allowance to be made for the manners of the times? Were the royal contemporaries of the Stuarts more attentive to their subjects' rights? Might not the epithets of "bloody and tyrannical" be, with at least equal justice, applied to the House of Tudor, of York, or any other of their predecessors?

The simple state of the case, Sir, seems to be this:—at that period, the science of government, the knowledge of the true relation between king and subject, was, like other sciences and other knowledge, just in its infancy, emerging from dark ages of ignorance and barbarity.

The Stuarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying; but these prerogatives were inimical to the happiness of a nation and the rights of subjects.

In this contest between prince and people, the consequence of that light of science which had lately dawned over Europe, the monarch of France, for example, was victorious over the struggling liberties of his people: with us, luckily, the monarch failed, and his unwarrantable pretensions fell a sacrifice to our rights and happiness. Whether it was owing to the wisdom of leading individuals, or to the justling of parties, I cannot pretend to determine; but likewise, happily for us, the kingly power was shifted into another branch of the family, who, as they owed the throne solely to the call of a free people, could claim nothing inconsistent with the covenanted terms which placed them there.

The Stuarts have been condemned and laughed at for the folly and impracticability of their attempts in 1715 and 1745. That they failed, I bless GOD; but cannot join in the ridicule against them. Who does not know that the abilities or defects of leaders and commanders are often hidden until put to the touchstone of exigency; and that there is a caprice of fortune, an omnipotence in particular accidents and conjunctures of circumstances, which exalt us as heroes, or brand us as madmen, just as they are for or against us?

Man, Mr. Publisher, is a strange, weak, inconsistent being: who would believe, Sir, that in this our Augustan age of liberality and refinement, while we seem so justly sensible and jealous of our rights and liberties, and animated with such indignation against the very memory of those who would have subverted them—that a certain people under our national protection should complain, not against our monarch and a few favourite advisers, but against our WHOLE LEGISLATIVE BODY, for similar oppression, and almost in the very same terms, as our forefathers did of the House of Stuart! I will not, I cannot, enter into the merits of the cause; but I dare say the American Congress, in 1776, will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed House of Stuart.

To conclude, Sir; let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity, feel for a family illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent; and let every Briton (and particularly every Scotsman), who ever looked with reverential pity on the dotage of a parent, cast a veil over the fatal mistakes of the kings of his forefathers.

R. B.

No. CXXXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

AT MOREHAM MAINS.

Mauchline, 13th November, 1788.

MADAM:

I HAD the very great pleasure of dining at Dunlop yesterday. Men are said to flatter women because they are weak; if it is so, poets must be weaker still; for Misses R. and K. and Miss G. M'K., with their flattering attentions, and artful compliments, absolutely turned my head. I own they did not lard me over as many a poet does his patron, but they

* [This passage evinces the loyal feelings of our Bard, and may well be contrasted with the bitter lines on Stirling, so ridiculously carped upon by some critics.]

† [The preacher alluded to was Mr. Kirkpatrick, a man equally stern and worthy. He got a "harmonious call" to a parish with a smaller stipend than Dunscore, and accepted it.]

so intoxicated me with their sly insinuations and delicate inuendos of compliment, that, if it had not been for a lucky recollection how much additional weight and lustre your good opinion and friendship must give me in that circle, I had certainly looked upon myself as a person of no small consequence. I dare not say one word how much I was charmed with the Major's friendly welcome, elegant manner, and acute remark, lest I should be thought to balance my orientalisms of applause over-against the finest quey [Heifer] in Ayr-shire, which he made me a present of to help and adorn my farming stock. As it was on hallow-day, I am determined annually as that day returns, to decorate her horns with an ode of gratitude to the family of Dunlop.

So soon as I know of your arrival at Dunlop, I will take the first conveniency to dedicate a day, or perhaps two, to you and friendship, under the guarantee of the Major's hospitality. There will soon be three-score and ten miles of permanent distance between us; and now that your friendship and friendly correspondence is entwisted with the heart-strings of my enjoyment of life, I must indulge myself in a happy day of the "The feast of reason and the flow of soul."

R. B.

No. CXXXII.

TO Mr. JAMES JOHNSON,

ENGRAVER.

Mauchline, November 15th, 1788.

My dear Sir:

I have sent you two more songs. If you have got any tunes, or any thing to correct, please send them by return of the carrier.

I can easily see, my dear friend, that you will very probably have four volumes. Perhaps you may not find your account lucratively in this business; but you are a patriot for the music of your country; and I am certain posterity will look on themselves as highly indebted to your public spirit. Be not in a hurry; let us go on correctly, and your name shall be immortal.

I am preparing a flaming preface for your third volume. I see every day new musical publications advertised; but what are they? Gaudy, hunted butterflies of a day, and then vanish for ever: but your work will outlive the momentary neglects of idle fashion, and defy the teeth of time.

Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild-goose chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her qualities, such as whether she be rather black, or fair; plump, or thin; short, or tall, &c.; and choose your air, and I shall task my muse to celebrate her.*

R. B.

No. CXXXIII.

TO Dr. BLACKLOCK.

Mauchline, November 15th, 1788.

Reverend and dear Sir:

As I hear nothing of your motions, but that you are, or were, out of town, I do not know where this may find you, or whether it will find you at all. I wrote you a long letter, dated from the land of matrimony, in June; but either it had not found you, or, what I dread more, it found you or Mrs. Blacklock in too precarious a state of health and spirits to take notice of an idle packet.

I have done many little things for Johnson, since I had the pleasure of seeing you; and I have finished one piece, in the way of Pope's "Moral Epistles;" but, from your silence, I have every thing to fear, so I have only sent you two melancholy things, which I tremble lest they should too well suit the tone of your present feelings.

In a fortnight I move, bag and baggage, to Nithsdale; till then, my direction is at this place; after that period, it will be at Ellisland, near Dumfries. It would extremely oblige me, were it but half a line, to let me know how you are, and where you are. Can I be indifferent to the fate of a man to whom I owe so much? A man whom I not only esteem, but venerate.

My warmest good wishes and most respectful compliments to Mrs. Blacklock, and Miss Johnston, if she is with you.

I cannot conclude without telling you that I am more and more pleased with the step I took respecting "my Jean." Two things, from my happy experience, I set down as apophthegms in life. A wife's head is immaterial, compared with her heart; and—"Virtue's (for wisdom what poet pretends to

* [James Johnson, proprietor of the "Musical Museum," was a kindly sort of person, and indulged his correspondent, the Bard, with many a flowing bowl during their studies on the mystic art of uniting music and poetry. The engraved pewter-plates of the work became, after his death, the property of Mr. Blackwood; and it is the wonder of many that a publisher so shrewd and enterprising has hitherto refrained from giving a new edition of a work so truly characteristic and national to the world: a copy of "The Scots Musical Museum" is one of the rarest of all rare things in the public market.—Cunningham.

A new edition has appeared of this celebrated work (1840), containing some valuable remarks on Scottish Song by the late ingenious Mr. Stenhouse, and the indefatigable Librarian to the writers of the Signet, Mr. David Laing. We have enriched the present edition of the Poet's works by many interesting quotations from the work in question.—C.]

it?) ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Adieu!* R. B.

[Here follow "The mother's lament for the loss of her son," and the song beginning "The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill." See p. 280; and p. 380.]

No. CXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 17th December, 1788.

MY DEAR HONOURED FRIEND:

YOURS, dated Edinburgh, which I have just read, makes me very unhappy. "Almost blind and wholly deaf," are melancholy news of human nature; but when told of a much-loved and honoured friend, they carry misery in the sound. Goodness on your part, and gratitude on mine, began a tie which has gradually entwisted itself among the dearest chords of my bosom, and I tremble at the omens of your late and present ailing habit and shattered health. You miscalculate matters, widely, when you forbid my waiting on you, lest it should hurt my worldly concerns. My small scale of farming is exceedingly more simple and easy than what you have lately seen at Moreham Mains. But, be that as it may, the heart of the man and the fancy of the poet are the two grand considerations for which I live: if miry ridges and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my soul immortal, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once, and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods and picking up grubs; not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time. If you continue so deaf, I am afraid a visit will be no great pleasure to either of us; but if I hear you are got so well again as to be able to relish conversation, look you to it, Madam, for I will make my threatenings good. I am to be at the New-year-day fair of Ayr; and, by all that is sacred in the world, friend, I will come and see you.

Your meeting, which you so well describe, with your old schoolfellow and friend, was truly interesting. Out upon the ways of the world!—They spoil these "social offsprings of the heart." Two veterans of the "men of the world" would have met with little more heart-workings than two old hacks worn out on the road. Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase, "Auld lang syne," exceedingly expressive? There is an old song and tune which have often thrilled through my soul. You know I am an enthusiast in old Scotch songs. I shall give you the verses on the other sheet, as I suppose Mr. Ker will save you the postage.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot?"†

Light be the turf on the breast of the Heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment! There is more of the fire of native genius in it than in half-a-dozen of modern English Bacchanalians! Now I am on my hobby-horse, I cannot help inserting two other old stanzas, which please me mightily:—

"Go fetch to me a pint of wine." ‡

R. B.

No. CXXXV.

TO MISS DAVIES.

December, 1788.

MADAM:

I UNDERSTAND my very worthy neighbour, Mr. Riddel, has informed you that I have made you the subject of some verses. There is something so provoking in the idea of being the burthen of a ballad that I do not think Job, or Moses, though such patterns of patience and meekness, could have resisted the curiosity to know what that ballad was: so my worthy friend has done me a mischief, which I dare say he never intended; and reduced me to the unfortunate alternative of leaving your curiosity ungratified, or else disgusting you with foolish verses, the unfinished production of a random moment, and never meant to have met your ear. I have heard or read somewhere of a gentleman who had some genius, much eccentricity, and very considerable dexterity with his pencil. In the accidental group of life into which one is thrown, wherever this gentleman met with a character in a more than ordinary degree congenial to his heart, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, he said, as a *nota bene*, to point out the agreeable recollection to his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, my muse is to me; and the verses I do myself the honour to send you are a *memento* exactly of the same kind that he indulged in.

It may be more owing to the fastidiousness of my caprice than the delicacy of my taste; but I am so often tired, disgusted, and hurt with

* [It was little that Blacklock had in his power to do for a brother poet—but that little he did with a fond alacrity, and with a modest grace.—"Poetry was to him the dear solace of perpetual blindness; cheerfulness, even to gaiety, was, notwithstanding that irremediable misfortune, long the predominant colour of his mind. In his latter years, when the gloom might otherwise have thickened around him, hope, faith, devotion the most fervent and sublime, exalted his mind to heaven, and made him maintain his wonted cheerfulness in the expectation of a speedy dissolution."—HERON.]

† [See p. 474.] ‡ [See p. 379.]

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that these songs are both of Burns's own composition.

the insipidity, affectation, and pride of mankind, that when I meet with a person "after my own heart," I positively feel what an orthodox Protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts on my fancy like inspiration; and I can no more desist rhyming, on the impulse, than an Eolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air. A distich or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were grey-bearded age; but where my theme is youth and beauty, a young lady whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment are equally striking and unaffected—by heavens! though I had lived three-score years a married man, and three-score years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea: and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject.*

R. B.

No. CXXXVI.

TO Mr. JOHN TENNANT.†

December, 22, 1788.

I YESTERDAY tried my cask of whiskey for the first time, and I assure you it does you great credit. It will bear five waters, strong; or six, ordinary toddy. The whiskey of this country is a most rascally liquor; and, by consequence, only drunk by the most rascally part of the inhabitants. I am persuaded, if you once get a footing here, you might do a great deal of business, in the way of consumpt; and should you commence distiller again, this is the native barley country. I am ignorant if, in your present way of dealing, you would think it worth your while to extend your business so far as this country side. I write you this on the account of an accident, which I must take the merit of having partly designed to. A neighbour of mine, a John Currie, miller in Carse-mill‡—a man who is, in a word, a "very" good man, even for a £500 bargain—he and his wife were in my house the time I broke open the cask. They keep a country public house, and sell a great deal of foreign spirits, but all along thought that whiskey would have degraded this house. They were perfectly astonished at my whiskey, both for its taste and strength; and, by their desire, I write you to know if you could supply them with liquor of an equal quality, and what price. Please write me by first post, and direct to me at Ellisland, near Dumfries. If you could take a jaunt this way yourself, I have a spare spoon, knife, and fork, very much at your service. My compliments to Mrs. Tennant, and all the good folks in Glenconner and Barquharrie.

R. B.

No. CXXXVII.

TO JOHN RICHMOND,

EDINBURGH.

[*Mossgiel, 9th July*, 1786.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WITH the sincerest grief I read your letter. You are truly a son of misfortune. I shall be extremely anxious to hear from you how your health goes on; if it is in any way re-establishing: or if Leith promises well; in short, how you feel in the inner man.

No news worth any thing: only godly Bryan was in the inquisition yesterday, and half the country-side as witnesses against him. He still stands out steady and denying: but proof was led yester-night of circumstances highly suspicious; almost *de facto:* one of the servant girls made faith that she upon a time rashly entered the house—to speak in your cant, "in the hour of cause."

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* [The Laird of Glenriddel, it appears, had informed

"The charming, lovely Davies"

that Burns was making a ballad on her beauty. The Poet took advantage of this, and sent the song enclosed in this truly characteristic letter.

† [Mr. Tennant, of Ayr, one of the few surviving early friends of Burns, has the following recollections respecting him:—"He first knew the poet, when attending Mr. Murdoch's school at Ayr, he being then fifteen, and Burns a year and a half older. Burns and he were favourite pupils of Murdoch, who used to take them alternately to live with him, allowing them a share of his bed. Mr. Murdoch was a well-informed and zealous teacher—a particularly good French scholar, insomuch that he at one time taught the language in France. He thought his voice had some peculiar quality of power, adapting it in an uncommon degree for French pronunciation. To this predilection of the teacher it is probably owing that Burns acquired so much French, and had such a fancy for introducing snatches of it into his letters. Murdoch was so anxious to advance his two favourite pupils that, while they were living with him, he was always taking opportunities of communicating knowledge. The intellectual gifts of Burns even at this time greatly impressed his fellow-scholar. Robert and Gilbert Burns were like no other young men. Their style of language was quite above that of their compeers. Robert had borrowed great numbers of books, and acquainted himself with their contents. He read rapidly, but remembered all that was interesting or valuable in what he read. He had the New Testament more at command than any other youth ever known to Mr. Tennant; who was, altogether, more impressed in these his boyish days by the discourse of the youthful poet than he afterwards was by his published verses. The elocution of Burns resembled that of Edmund Kean—deep, thoughtful, emphatic; and in controversy, no man could stand before him."]

‡ [The mill of John Currie stood on a small stream, which feeds the Loch of Friars-Carse. A little island seems to float in the midst of this sheet of water, to which it is said the people in ancient times, during an English *raid*, carried their most valuable effects.

Among the letters and memoranda of the Poet, many lines and couplets occur in praise of ale, or the "dearest of distillations—last and best." Some are worse—some better than the following:—

"I may be drunk to-night,
I'll never be drunk no more:
But aye where they sell guid ale,
I may look in at the door."]

I have waited on Armour since her return home: not from any the least view of reconciliation, but merely to ask for her health, and —to you I will confess it—from a foolish hankering fondness—very ill placed indeed. The mother forbade me the house, nor did Jean shew the penitence that might have been expected. However, the priest, I am informed, will give me a certificate as a single man, if I comply with the rules of the church, which, for that very reason, I intend to do.

I am going to put on sackcloth and ashes this day. I am indulged so far as to appear in my own seat. *Peccavi, pater, miserere mei.* My book will be ready in a fortnight. If you have any subscribers, return them by Connell. The Lord stand with the righteous: amen, amen.* R. B.

No. CXXXVIII.

TO JAMES JOHNSON,†

EDITOR OF THE SCOTS MUSICAL MUSEUM.

[*Lawnmarket, Friday noon, 3d May*, 1787.]

DEAR SIR:

I have sent you a song never before known, for your collection; the air by M'Gibbon, but I know not the author of the words, as I got it from Dr. Blacklock.

Farewell, my dear Sir! I wished to have seen you, but I have been dreadfully throng, as I march to-morrow. Had my acquaintance with you been a little older, I would have asked the favour of your correspondence, as I have met with few people whose company and conversation gave me so much pleasure, because I have met with few whose sentiments are so congenial to my own.

When Dunbar and you meet, tell him that I left Edinburgh with the idea of him hanging somewhere about my heart.

Keep the original of this song till we meet again, whenever that may be. R. B.

No. CXXXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, New-year-day Morning, 1789.

THIS, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description!—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings: every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day; the first Sunday of May; a breezy, blue-skyed noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day, about the end of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza," a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild brier-rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plovers, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Eolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing acci-

* [The minister who so boldly took it upon him to pronounce Burns a single man, after he had been married according to the law and usage of Scotland, was the Rev. Mr. Auld, of Mauchline. That he had no such power, no one can deny. The kirk of Scotland and the civil law were long at variance on the important subject of marriage. When a young pair were married by a magistrate, the minister of their parish not uncommonly caused them to endure a rebuke in the church before they were re-admitted to its bosom; this was sometimes resisted by the more obstinate or knowing of the peasantry, and ill blood, harsh words, and threats of kirk-censure were the consequence. Burns, instead of mounting the common seat of shame, was allowed to stand in his own seat. There might be other reasons for this: Auld was alarmed lest severity on his part should call forth a burning satire on that of the other; moreover, the repentance-stool had other occupants: the poet was one of seven who appeared, figuratively at least, in sack-cloth on the same day. In one of his memorandum books occurs the following singular entry:—"Mem.: to enquire at Mr. M'Math whether, when a man has appeared in church for a child, and had another prior to it in point of time, but not discovered till after, he is liable for that one again. Note. The child was five and a half years old before the father was cited."

The above Letter was communicated to Mr. Cunningham by James Grierson, Esq., of Dalgonar, in Dumfries-shire.]

† [This letter was first published in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the Poet's works, and was communicated by James Smith, Esq., of Jordan-hill. The song which it enclosed has not been ascertained.]

dent? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.*

R. B.

No. CXL.

TO Dr. MOORE.

Ellisland, 4th Jan. 1789.

Sir,

As often as I think of writing to you, which has been three or four times every week these six months, it gives me something so like the idea of an ordinary-sized statue offering at a conversation with the Rhodian colossus, that my mind misgives me, and the affair always miscarries somewhere between purpose and resolve. I have at last got some business with you, and business letters are written by the style-book. I say my business is with you, Sir, for you never had any with me, except the business that benevolence has in the mansion of poverty.

The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my late eclat was owing to the singularity of my situation, and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from Nature to the poetic character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by Him "who forms the secret bias of the soul;"—but I as firmly believe that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains. At least I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive—but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any, of the profession, the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know) whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece, it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye that one loses, in a good measure, the powers of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend—not only of abilities to judge, but with good-nature enough, like a prudent teacher with a young learner, to praise perhaps a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all poetic diseases—heart-breaking despondency of himself.—Dare I, Sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? I enclose you an essay of mine in a walk of poesy to me entirely new; I mean the epistle addressed to R. G., Esq., or Robert Graham, of Fintray Esq., a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. The story of the poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story, and to give you the one, I must give you something of the other. I cannot boast of Mr. Creech's ingenuous fair dealing with me. He kept me hanging about Edinburgh from the 7th August 1787, until the 13th April 1788, before he would condescend to give me a statement of affairs; nor had I got it even then, but for an angry letter I wrote him, which irritated his pride. "I could" not a "tale" but a detail "unfold," but what am I that should speak against the Lord's anointed Bailie of Edinburgh?†

I believe I shall, in the whole, (100*l.* copy-right included,) clear about 400*l.* some little odds; and even part of this depends upon what the gentleman has yet to settle with me. I give you this information, because you did me the honour to interest yourself much in my welfare. I give you this information, but I give it to yourself only, for I am still much in the gentleman's mercy. Perhaps I injure the man in the idea I am sometimes tempted to have of him—God forbid I should! A little time will try, for in a month I shall go to town to wind up the business if possible.

To give the rest of my story in brief, I have married "my Jean," and taken a farm: with the first step I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied: with the last, it is rather the reverse. I have a younger brother, who

* [That this mood of feeling and reflection was not uncommon in the household of "The Burns Family," the following letter, written on the same day, will sufficiently shew:

"*Mossgiel, 1st Jan.*, 1789.

"Dear Brother,

"I have just finished my New-year's day breakfast in the usual form, which naturally makes me call to mind the days of former years, and the society in which we used to begin them; and when I look at our family vicissitudes, 'thro' the dark postern of time long elapsed,' I cannot help remarking to you, my dear brother, how good the God of Seasons is to us; and that, however some clouds may seem to lower over the portion of time before us, we have great reason to hope that all will turn out well.

"Your mother and sisters, with Robert the second, join me in the compliments of the season to you and Mrs. Burns, and beg you will remember us in the same manner to William, the first time you see him.

"I am, dear Brother, yours,

"Gilbert Burns."]

† [Those who publish books for authors are not in general the most prompt in rendering returns, and for this there is some reason, as well as excuse, in the forms and circumstances of the book-trade; but Mr. Creech was remarkable for his reluctance to settle accounts of any kind, and of this the poet seems to have been eminently a victim.—Chambers.]

supports my aged mother; another still younger brother, and three sisters, in a farm. On my last return from Edinburgh, it cost me about 180*l.* to save them from ruin. Not that I have lost so much—I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much. I give myself no airs on this, for it was mere selfishness on my part: I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the *grand reckoning*. There is still one thing would make my circumstances quite easy: I have an excise officer's commission, and I live in the midst of a country division. My request to Mr. Graham, who is one of the Commissioners of Excise, was, if in his power, to procure me that division. If I were very sanguine, I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a treasury warrant for supervisor, surveyor-general, &c.

Thus, secure of a livelihood, "to thee, sweet poetry, delightful maid," I would consecrate my future days.* R. B.

No. CXLI.

TO Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, Jan. 6, 1789.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear Sir! May you be comparatively happy up to your comparative worth among the sons of men; which wish would, I am sure, make you one of the most blest of the human race.

I do not know if passing as a "Writer to the signet" be a trial of scientific merit, or a mere business of friends and interest. However it be, let me quote you my two favourite passages, which, though I have repeated them ten thousand times, still they rouse my manhood and steel my resolution like inspiration.

> ——"On Reason build resolve,
> That column of true majesty in man."
>
> Young.

> "Hear, Alfred, hero of the state,
> Thy genius heaven's high will declare;
> The triumph of the truly great
> Is never, never to despair!
> Is never to despair!"
>
> Masque of Alfred.

I grant you enter the lists of life, to struggle for bread, business, notice, and distinction, in common with hundreds.—But who are they? Men, like yourself, and of that aggregate body your compeers, seven tenths of whom come short of your advantages natural and accidental; while two of those that remain either neglect their parts, as flowers blooming in a desert, or mis-spend their strength, like a bull goring a bramble bush.

But to change the theme: I am still catering for Johnson's publication; and among others, I have brushed up the following old favourite song a little, with a view to your worship. I have only altered a word here and there; but if you like the humour of it, we shall think of a stanza or two to add to it.†

R. B.

No. CXLII.

TO

PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.

Ellisland, 20th Jan. 1789.

Sir,

The enclosed sealed packet I sent to Edinburgh, a few days after I had the happiness of meeting you in Ayr-shire, but you were gone for the Continent. I have now added a few more of my productions, those for which I am indebted to the Nithsdale Muses. The piece inscribed to R. G., Esq., is a copy of verses I sent Mr. Graham, of Fintray, accompanying a request for his assistance in a matter, to me, of very great moment. To that gentleman I am already doubly indebted: for deeds of kindness of serious import to my dearest interests, done in a manner grateful to the delicate feelings of sensibility. This poem is a species of composition new to me, but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the "Poet's Progress." These fragments, if my design succeed, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions, ripened by years; of course I do not wish it much known. The fragment beginning "A little upright, pert, tart, &c.," I have not shewn to man living, till I now send it you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching; but, lest idle conjecture should pretend to point out the original, please to let it be for your single, sole inspection.

* [The poet was not slow in perceiving that Ellisland was not the bargain he had reckoned on. He had intimated this before to Margaret Chalmers; and time only confirmed his surmises. Well might he apply to himself the words of Scripture, "And behold nothing which this man sets his heart upon shall prosper."—Cunningham.]

† [The name of the song which the poet brushed up and sent to his friend is no where intimated; it was no doubt one of a humorous or convivial cast. He was at this period, and indeed for years after, busily employed in writing original compositions, and in collecting and amending scraps of old song for Johnson's Musical Museum.]

Need I make any apology for this trouble to a gentleman who has treated me with such marked benevolence and peculiar kindness—who has entered into my interests with so much zeal, and on whose critical decisions I can so fully depend? A poet as I am by trade, these decisions are to me of the last consequence. My late transient acquaintance among some of the mere rank and file of greatness, I resign with ease; but to the distinguished champions of genius and learning I shall be ever ambitious of being known. The native genius and accurate discernment in Mr. Stewart's critical strictures; the justness (iron justice, for he has no bowels of compassion for a poor poetic sinner) of Dr. Gregory's remarks, and the delicacy of Professor Dalzel's taste, I shall ever revere.*

I shall be in Edinburgh some time next month.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your highly obliged, and very humble servant,

R. B.

No CXLIII.

TO BISHOP GEDDES.†

Ellisland, 3d Feb. 1789.

Venerable Father,

As I am conscious that, wherever I am, you do me the honour to interest yourself in my welfare, it gives me pleasure to inform you, that I am here at last, stationary in the serious business of life, and have now not only the retired leisure, but the hearty inclination, to attend to those great and important questions—what I am? where I am? and for what I am destined?

In that first concern, the conduct of the man, there was ever but one side on which I was habitually blameable, and there I have secured myself in the way pointed out by Nature and Nature's God. I was sensible that, to so helpless a creature as a poor poet, a wife and family were incumbrances, which a species of prudence would bid him shun; but when the alternative was, being at eternal warfare with myself, on account of habitual follies, to give them no worse name, which no general example, no licentious wit, no sophistical infidelity, would, to me, ever justify, I must have been a fool to have hesitated, and a madman to have made another choice. Besides, I had in "my Jean" a long and much loved fellow creature's happiness or misery among my hands—and who could trifle with such a deposit?

In the affair of a livelihood, I think myself tolerably secure: I have good hopes of my farm, but should they fail, I have an excise commission, which, on my simple petition, will, at any time, procure me bread. There is a certain stigma affixed to the character of an excise officer, but I do not pretend to borrow honour from my profession; and though the salary be comparatively small, it is luxury to any thing that the first twenty-five years of my life taught me to expect.

Thus, with a rational aim and method in life, you may easily guess, my reverend and much-honoured friend, that my characteristical trade is not forgotten. I am, if possible, more than ever an enthusiast to the muses. I am determined to study man and nature, and in that view incessantly; and to try if the ripening and corrections of years can enable me to produce something worth preserving.

You will see in your book, which I beg your pardon for detaining so long, that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of Nith. Some large poetic plans that are floating in my imagination, or partly put in execution, I shall impart to you when I have the pleasure of meeting with you; which, if you are then in Edinburgh, I shall have about the beginning of March.

That acquaintance, worthy Sir, with which you were pleased to honour me, you must still allow me to challenge; for with whatever unconcern I give up my transient connexion with the merely Great, I cannot lose the patronizing notice of the learned and good, without the bitterest regret.

R. B.

* [The poet alludes to the merciless strictures of Dr. Gregory on the poem the "Wounded Hare," when he says he has no bowels of compassion for a poor poetic sinner. Stewart was more gentle in his criticisms: of him and his lady—a poetess of no mean powers—Burns ever spoke in terms almost rapturous; they were kind to him when friends were few and praise scanty—he was not a man to forget such obligations.]

† [Alexander Geddes, to whom this letter is addressed, was born at Arradowl in Banff-shire, in 1737. He was a scholar and controversialist; a poet, too, and one of the bishops of the broken remnant of the ancient Catholic church of Scotland. He is known in verse as the author of a very clever rustic poem, beginning

"There was a wee wifiekie, was coming frae the fair."

He is also known as the translator of one of the books of the Iliad. In his controversies and conversation he was so liberal that he incurred the displeasure of some of his brethren in Scotland, which induced him to remove to London, where he was patronized by Lord Petre, and undertook a "New Translation of the Bible," the prospectus to which is said to have alarmed both Jews and Christians. He was a man of undoubted talents and learning; his temper was quick, and his vanity not little. He died 20th February, 1802, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

The volume which Burns sent to the bishop was the Edinburgh copy of his poems, with the addition, in his own hand-writing, of such compositions as the muse of Nithsdale had inspired. The blanks too in the print were all filled up. This precious book belongs to Margaret Geddes, the wife of John Hyslop, surgeon, Finsbury-square, grandson of John Maxwell, of Terraughty, to whom the poet addressed one of his most spirited epistles; it is in good preservation, and in equally excellent hands.—Cunningham.]

No. CXLIV.

TO Mr. JAMES BURNESS.

Ellisland, 9th Feb. 1789.

My dear Sir,

Why I did not write to you long ago is what, even on the rack, I could not answer. If you can in your mind form an idea of indolence, dissipation, hurry, cares, change of country, entering on untried scenes of life, all combined, you will save me the trouble of a blushing apology. It could not be want of regard for a man for whom I had a high esteem before I knew him—an esteem which has much increased since I did know him; and, this caveat entered, I shall plead guilty to any other indictment with which you shall please to charge me.

After I parted from you, for many months my life was one continued scene of dissipation. Here at last I am become stationary, and have taken a farm and—a wife.

The farm is beautifully situated on the Nith, a large river that runs by Dumfries, and falls into the Solway frith. I have gotten a lease of my farm as long as I pleased; but how it may turn out is just a guess, and it is yet to improve and enclose, &c.; however, I have good hopes of my bargain on the whole.

My wife is my Jean, with whose story you are partly acquainted. I found I had a much loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among my hands, and I durst not trifle with so sacred a deposit. Indeed I have not any reason to repent the step I have taken, as I have attached myself to a very good wife, and have shaken myself loose of every bad failing.

I have found my book a very profitable business, and with the profits of it I have begun life pretty decently. Should fortune not favour me in farming, as I have no great faith in her fickle ladyship, I have provided myself in another resource, which, however some folks may affect to despise it, is still a comfortable shift in the day of misfortune. In the heyday of my fame, a gentleman, whose name at least I dare say you know, as his estate lies somewhere near Dundee, Mr. Graham, of Fintray, one of the Commissioners of Excise, offered me the commission of an excise officer. I thought it prudent to accept the offer; and accordingly I took my instructions, and have my commission by me. Whether I may ever do duty, or be a penny the better for it, is what I do not know; but I have the comfortable assurance that, come whatever ill fate will, I can, on my simple petition to the Excise-Board, get into employ.

We have lost poor uncle Robert this winter. He has long been very weak, and, with very little alteration on him, he expired 3rd Jan.

His son William has been with me this winter, and goes in May to be an apprentice to a mason. His other son, the eldest, John, comes to me I expect in summer. They are both remarkably stout young fellows, and promise to do well. His only daughter, Fanny, has been with me ever since her father's death, and I purpose keeping her in my family till she be quite woman grown, and fit for better service. She is one of the cleverest girls, and has one of the most amiable dispositions, I have ever seen.*

All friends in this country and Ayr-shire are well. Remember me to all friends in the north. My wife joins me in compliments to Mrs. B. and family.

I am ever, my dear Cousin,

Yours, sincerely,

R. B.

No. CXLV.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 4th March, 1789.

Here am I, my honoured friend, returned safe from the capital. To a man who has a home, however humble or remote — if that home is, like mine, the scene of domestic comfort—the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust.

"Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you!"

When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim—"What merits has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I am kicked into the world, the sport of folly, or the victim of pride?" I have read somewhere of a monarch (in Spain I think it was), who was so out of humour with the Ptolomean system of astronomy that he said, had he been of the Creator's council, he could have saved him a great deal of labour and absurdity. I will not defend this blasphemous speech; but often, as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Princes'-street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own

* [Fanny Burns, the poet's cousin, merited all the commendations he has here bestowed. She subsequently became the wife of Adam Armour, the brother of bonnie Jean; she went with her husband to Mauchline, and is still alive (1838). Her son is now with his paternal uncle, pursuing successfully the honourable calling of a London merchant.]

conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective. This trifling alteration, not to mention the prodigious saving it would be in the tear and wear of the neck and limb-sinews of many of his majesty's liege subjects, in the way of tossing the head and tiptoe strutting, would evidently turn out a vast advantage, in enabling us at once to adjust the ceremonials in making a bow, or making way to a great man, and that too within a second of the precise spherical angle of reverence, or an inch of the particular point of respectful distance, which the important creature itself requires; as a measuring-glance at its towering altitude would determine the affair like instinct.

You are right, Madam, in your idea of poor Mylne's poem, which he has addressed to me. The piece has a good deal of merit, but it has one great fault—it is, by far, too long. Besides, my success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice, under the title of Scottish Poets, that the very term Scottish Poetry borders on the burlesque. When I write to Mr. Carfrae, I shall advise him rather to try one of his deceased friend's English pieces. I am prodigiously hurried with my own matters, else I would have requested a perusal of all Mylne's poetic performances; and would have offered his friends my assistance in either selecting or correcting what would be proper for the press. What it is that occupies me so much, and perhaps a little oppresses my spirits, shall fill up a paragraph in some future letter. In the mean time, allow me to close this epistle with a few lines done by a friend of mine * * *. I give you them, that, as you have seen the original, you may guess whether one or two alterations I have ventured to make in them be any real improvement.

"Like the fair plant that from our touch withdraws,
Shrink, mildly fearful, even from applause,
Be all a mother's fondest hope can dream,
And all you are, my charming * * * *, seem.
Straight as the fox-glove, ere her bells disclose,
Mild as the maiden-blushing hawthorn blows,
Fair as the fairest of each lovely kind,
Your form shall be the image of your mind;
Your manners shall so true your soul express
That all shall long to know the worth they guess;
Congenial hearts shall greet with kindred love,
And even sick'ning envy must approve.''*

R. B.

No. CXLVI.

TO THE Rev. P. CARFRAE.

March, 1789.

Rev. Sir:

I do not recollect that I have ever felt a severer pang of shame than on looking at the date of your obliging letter which accompanied Mr. Mylne's poem.

I am much to blame: the honour Mr. Mylne has done me, greatly enhanced in its value by the endearing, though melancholy, circumstance of its being the last production of his muse, deserved a better return.

I have, as you hint, thought of sending a copy of the poem to some periodical publication; but, on second thoughts, I am afraid that, in the present case, it would be an improper step. My success, perhaps as much accidental as merited, has brought an inundation of nonsense under the name of Scottish poetry. Subscription-bills for Scottish poems have so dunned, and daily do dun the public, that the very name is in danger of contempt. For these reasons, if publishing any of Mr. Mylne's poems in a magazine, &c., be at all prudent, in my opinion it certainly should not be a Scottish poem. The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Mylne's relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest which fate has denied himself to reap. But let the friends of Mr. Mylne's fame (among whom I crave the honour of ranking myself) always keep in eye his respectability as a man and as a poet, and take no measure that, before the world knows any thing about him, would risk his name and character being classed with the fools of the times.

I have, Sir, some experience of publishing; and the way in which I would proceed with Mr. Mylne's poems is this:—I would publish, in two or three English and Scottish public papers, any one of his English poems which should, by private judges, be thought the most excellent, and mention it, at the same time, as one of the productions of a Lothian farmer, of respectable character, lately deceased, whose poems his friends had it in idea to publish, soon, by subscription, for the sake of his numerous family:—not in pity to that family, but in justice to what his friends think the poetic merits of the deceased; and to secure, in the most effectual manner, to those tender connexions, whose right it is, the pecuniary reward of those merits.† R. B.

* [These beautiful lines, we have reason to believe, are the production of the lady to whom this letter is addressed. —Currie.]

† [The letter of the Rev. Peter Carfrae to the poet of Ayrshire is as follows:—

January 2nd, 1789.

Sir,—If you have lately seen Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop, you have certainly heard of the author of the verses which accompany this letter. He was a man highly respectable for every accomplishment and virtue which adorns the character of a man or a Christian. To a great degree of literature, of taste, and poetic genius, were added an invincible modesty of temper, which prevented, in some measure, his figuring in life, and confined the perfect knowledge of his character and talents to the small circle of his chosen friends. He was ultimately taken from us, a few weeks ago, by an inflamma-

No. CXLVII.

TO Dr. MOORE.

Ellisland, 23rd March, 1789.

Sir:

The gentleman who will deliver you this is a Mr. Nielson, a worthy clergyman in my neighbourhood, and a very particular acquaintance of mine.* As I have troubled him with this packet, I must turn him over to your goodness, to recompense him for it in a way in which he much needs your assistance, and where you can effectually serve him:—Mr. Nielson is on his way for France, to wait on his Grace of Queensberry, on some little business of a good deal of importance to him, and he wishes for your instructions respecting the most eligible mode of travelling, &c., for him, when he has crossed the Channel. I should not have dared to take this liberty with you, but that I am told, by those who have the honour of your personal acquaintance, that to be a poor honest Scotchman is a letter of recommendation to you, and that to have it in your power to serve such a character gives you much pleasure.

The enclosed ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. Oswald, of Auchencruive. You, probably, knew her personally, an honour of which I cannot boast; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath, she was much less blameable. In January last, on my road to Ayr-shire, I had put up at Bailie Whigham's, in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald, and poor I was forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest moors and hills of Ayr-shire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me, when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say that, when a good fire at New Cumnock had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode.

I was at Edinburgh lately, and settled finally with Mr. Creech; and I must own that, at last, he has been amicable and fair with me.

R. B.†

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tory fever, in the prime of life—beloved by all who enjoyed his acquaintance, and lamented by all who have any regard for virtue or genius. There is a woe pronounced in Scripture against the person whom all men speak well of; if ever that woe fell upon the head of mortal man, it fell upon him. He has left behind him a considerable number of compositions, chiefly poetical; sufficient, I imagine, to make a large octavo volume. In particular, two complete and regular tragedies, a farce of three acts, and some smaller poems on different subjects. It falls to my share, who have lived in the most intimate and uninterrupted friendship with him from my youth upwards, to transmit to you the verses he wrote on the publication of your incomparable poems. It is probable they were his last, as they were found in his scrutoire, folded up in the form of a letter addressed to you, and, I imagine, were only prevented from being sent by himself by that melancholy dispensation which we still bemoan. The verses themselves I will not pretend to criticise when writing to a gentleman whom I consider as entirely qualified to judge of their merit. They are the only verses he seems to have attempted in the Scottish style; and I hesitate not to say, in general, that they will bring no dishonour on the Scottish muse;—and allow me to add that, if it is your opinion they are not unworthy of the Author, and will be no discredit to you, it is the inclination of Mr. Mylne's friends that they should be immediately published in some periodical work, to give the world a specimen of what may be expected from his performances in the poetic line, which, perhaps, will be afterwards published for the advantage of his family.

* * * *

I must beg the favour of a letter from you, acknowledging the receipt of this, and to be allowed to subscribe myself, with great regard,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

P. Carfrae.]

* [The Rev. Edward Nielson, whom the poet introduces to the notice of Moore, was Minister of Kirkbean, on the Solway:—he was eloquent and learned, a jovial man, and loved good cheer and merry company, rather more than became his station. He lived on a smuggling coast; numbered among his parishioners men concerned in the contraband trade, nor did he escape the suspicion of silently permitting a traffic which injured the morals of his people more deeply than either his admonitions or example could mend.]

† [Dr. Moore's reply to this letter is as follows:—

Clifford-street, June 10, 1789.

"Dear Sir,

"I thank you for the different communications you have made me of your occasional productions in manuscript, all of which have merit, and some of them merit of a different kind from what appears in the poems you have published. You ought carefully to preserve all your occasional productions, to correct and improve them at your leisure; and when you can select as many of these as will make a volume, publish it either at Edinburgh or London, by subscription; on such an occasion, it may be in my power, as it is very much in my inclinations, to be of service to you.

"If I were to offer an opinion, it would be that in your future productions you should abandon the Scottish stanza and dialect, and adopt the measure and language of modern English poetry.

"The stanza which you use in imitation of *Christ Kirk on the Green*, with the tiresome repetition of 'that day,' is fatiguing to English ears, and I should think not very agreeable to Scottish.

"All the fine satire and humour of your *Holy Fair* is lost on the English; yet, without more trouble to yourself, you could have conveyed the whole to them. The same is true of some of your other poems. In your *Epistle to James Smith*, the stanzas from that beginning with this line, 'This life, so far's I understand,'' to that which ends with, 'Short while it grieves,' are easy, flowing, gaily philosophical, and, of Horatian elegance—the language is English, with a *few* Scottish words, and some of those so harmonious as to add to the beauty; for what poet would not prefer *gloaming to twilight?*

"I imagine that by carefully keeping, and occasionally polishing and correcting, those verses, which the Muse dictates, you will, within a year or two, have another volume as large as the first, ready for the press; and this without diverting you from every proper attention to the study and practice of husbandry, in which I understand you are very

No. CXLVIII.

TO Mr. WILLIAM BURNS.

Isle, March 25, 1789.

I HAVE stolen from my corn-sowing this minute to write a line to accompany your shirt and hat, for I can no more. Your sister Nannie arrived yesternight, and begs to be remembered to you. Write me every opportunity—never mind postage. My head, too, is as addle as an egg this morning, with dining abroad yesterday. I received yours by the mason. Forgive me this foolish-looking scrawl of an epistle.

I am ever,
My dear William,
Yours,
R. B.

P. S.—If you are not then gone from Longtown, I'll write you a long letter by this day se'nnight. If you should not succeed in your tramps, don't be dejected, nor take any rash step—return to us in that case, and we will court Fortune's better humour. Remember this, I charge you.*

R. B.

No. CXLIX.

TO Mr. HILL.

Ellisland, 2nd April, 1789.

I WILL make no excuse, my dear Bibliopolus, (GOD forgive me for murdering language!) that I have sat down to write you on this vile paper.

It is economy, Sir; it is that cardinal virtue, prudence; so I beg you will sit down, and either compose or borrow a panegyric. If you are going to borrow, apply to * * * * * *† to compose, or rather to compound, something very clever on my remarkable frugality; that I write to one of my most esteemed friends on this wretched paper, which was originally intended for the venal fist of some drunken exciseman, to take dirty notes in a miserable vault of an ale-cellar.

O Frugality! thou mother of ten thousand blessings—thou cook of fat beef and dainty greens!—thou manufacturer of warm Shetland hose, and comfortable surtouts!—thou old housewife, darning thy decayed stockings with thy ancient spectacles on thy aged nose!—lead me, hand me in thy clutching palsied fist, up those heights, and through those thickets, hitherto inaccessible, and impervious to my anxious, weary feet:—not those Parnassian crags, bleak and barren, where the hungry worshippers of fame are, breathless, clambering, hanging between heaven and hell; but those glittering cliffs of Potosi, where the all-sufficient, all-powerful deity, Wealth, holds his immediate Court of joys and pleasures; where the sunny exposure of plenty, and the hot walls of profusion, produce those blissful fruits of luxury, exotics in this world, and natives of Paradise! —Thou withered sybil, my sage conductress, usher me into thy refulgent, adored presence!—The power, splendid and potent as he now is, was once the puling nursling of thy faithful care, and tender arms!—Call me thy son, thy cousin, thy kinsman, or favourite, and adjure the god, by the scenes of his infant years, no longer to repulse me as a stranger, or an alien, but to favour me with his peculiar countenance and protection!—He daily bestows his greatest kindness on the undeserving and the worthless—assure him that I bring ample documents of meritorious demerits! Pledge yourself for me, that, for the glorious cause of LUCRE, I will do any thing, be any thing—but the horse-leech of private oppression, or the vulture of public robbery!

But to descend from heroics.

* * * *

I want a Shakspeare; I want likewise an English dictionary—Johnson's, I suppose, is the best. In these, and all my prose commissions, the cheapest is always the best for me. There is a small debt of honour that I owe Mr. Robert Cleghorn, in Saughton Mills, my worthy friend, and your well-wisher. Please give him, and urge him to take it, the first time you see him, ten shillings worth of any thing you have to sell, and place it to my account.

learned, and which I fancy you will choose to adhere to as a wife, while poetry amuses you from time to time as a mistress. The former, like a prudent wife, must not shew ill humour, although you retain a sneaking kindness to this agreeable gipsey, and pay her occasional visits, which in no manner alienates your heart from your lawful spouse, but tends, on the contrary, to promote her interest. I desired Mr. Cadell to write to Mr. Creech, to send you a copy of *Zeluco*. This performance has had great success here; but I shall be glad to have your opinion of it, because I value your opinion, and because I know you are above saying what you do not think.

"I beg you will offer my best wishes to my very good friend, Mrs. Hamilton, who I understand is your neighbour. If she is as happy as I wish her, she is happy enough. Make my compliments also to Mrs. Burns, and believe me to be with sincere esteem, dear Sir, yours, &c. ———"

* [The original of the above letter from the Poet to his brother William, is in the possession of Mr. J. Fraser, of the Red Lion Inn, Shakspeare Square, Edinburgh (a poet of no mean powers, and author of "Craigmillar," the "Soldier's Dream," and many other pieces, 1 vol. published in Edinburgh some time ago). The letter is framed and placed between two plates of glass—is suspended in one of the public apartments of the "Red Lion," where, trifling though it be, it is regarded by many visiters as a relic of no ordinary interest, and may be seen by any of the Poet's admirers. The letter was presented by Mr. Begg, schoolmaster, Ormiston, East Lothian, the poet's nephew (son of Nannie, alluded to in the letter,) to Mr. St. George Haddington, and by the latter gentleman to our friend Fraser.—The letter itself is common-place enough, but the P.S. is strongly characteristic of Burns."—*Kilmarnock Journal.*]

† [Probably the name required to fill up this blank was CREECH.—CHAMBERS.]

The library scheme that I mentioned to you is already begun, under the direction of Captain Riddel. There is another in emulation of it going on at Closeburn, under the auspices of Mr. Monteith, of Closeburn, which will be on a greater scale than ours. Captain Riddel gave his infant society a great many of his old books, else I had written you on that subject; but, one of these days, I shall trouble you with a commission for "The Monkland Friendly Society"*—a copy of *The Spectator*, *Mirror*, and *Lounger*, *Man of Feeling*, *Man of the World*, *Guthrie's Geographical Grammar*, with some religious pieces, will likely be our first order.

When I grow richer, I will write to you on gilt post, to make amends for this sheet. At present, every guinea has a five guinea errand with

My dear Sir,
Your faithful, poor, but honest friend,
R. B.

No. CL.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 4th April, 1789.

I NO sooner hit on any poetic plan of fancy but I wish to send it to you: and if knowing and reading these give half the pleasure to you that communicating them to you gives to me I am satisfied.

I have a poetic whim in my head, which I at present dedicate, or rather inscribe, to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox; but how long that fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the first lines I have just rough-sketched as follows:—[See the Sketch inscribed to the illustrious Statesman, page 283, with some additional lines recently published.]

On the 20th current I hope to have the honour of assuring you, in person, how sincerely I am—

R. B.

No. CLI.

TO Mrs. M'MURDO,

DRUMLANRIG.

Ellisland, 2nd May 1789.

MADAM:

I HAVE finished the piece which had the happy fortune to be honoured with your approbation; and never did little Miss with more sparkling pleasure shew her applauded sampler to partial mamma than I now send my poem† to you and Mr. M'Murdo if he is returned to Drumlanrig. You cannot easily imagine what thin-skinned animals—what sensitive plants poor poets are. How do we shrink into the embittered corner of self-abasement, when neglected or condemned by those to whom we look up! and how do we, in erect importance, add another cubit to our stature, on being noticed and applauded by those whom we honour and respect! My late visit to Drumlanrig has, I can tell you, Madam, given me a balloon waft up Parnassus, where on my fancied elevation I regard my poetic self with no small degree of complacency. Surely, with all their sins, the rhyming tribe are not ungrateful creatures.—I recollect your goodness to your humble guest—I see Mr. M'Murdo adding to the politeness of the gentleman the kindness of a friend, and my heart swells, as it would burst with warm emotions and ardent wishes! It may be it is not gratitude—it may be a mixed sensation. That strange, shifting, doubling animal MAN is so generally, at best, but a negative, often a worthless, creature, that we cannot see real goodness and native worth without feeling the bosom glow with sympathetic approbation.

With every sentiment of grateful respect,
I have the honour to be,
Madam,
Your obliged and grateful humble servant,
R. B.

No. CLII.

TO Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, 4th May, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR *duty-free* favour of the 26th April I received two days ago; I will not say I perused it with pleasure; that is the cold compliment of ceremony; I perused it, Sir, with delicious satisfaction;—in short, it is such a letter that not you, nor your friend, but the legislature, by express proviso in their postage laws, should frank. A letter informed with the soul of friendship is such an honour to human nature, that they should order it free ingress and egress to and from their bags and mails, as an encouragement and mark of distinction to super-eminent virtue.

* [The Monkland Society existed only while Captain Riddel lived, whose activity and taste aided in its establishment and continuance. Such clubs, when wisely conducted, are extremely beneficial: they diffuse useful and elegant knowledge among the rude and unlettered, and direct men's minds to the contemplation of what is worthy and noble. History, biography, voyages and travels, are chiefly required; the peasantry of the north are sufficiently well acquainted with divinity and verse.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [The poem alluded to was the song entitled, "There was a lass and she was fair," inserted at page 463. The heroine was the eldest daughter of Mrs. M'Murdo, and sister to Phillis. Their charms gave lustre to some of the poet's happiest lyrics.]

I have just put the last hand to a little poem, which I think will be something to your taste. One morning lately, as I was out pretty early in the fields, sowing some grass seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying for our sport individuals in the animal creation, that do not injure us materially, which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue.

Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye!
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

[See "The Wounded Hare," page 284.]

Let me know how you like my poem. I am doubtful whether it would not be an improvement to keep out the last stanza but one altogether.*

Cruikshank† is a glorious production of the Author of man. You, he, and the noble Colonel‡ of the Crochallan Fencibles are to me

"Dear as the ruddy drops which warm my heart."

I have a good mind to make verses on you all, to the tune of "*Three good fellows ayont the glen.*"

R. B.

No. CLIII.

TO Mr. SAMUEL BROWN.§

Mossgiel, 4th May, 1789.

Dear Uncle,

This, I hope, will find you and your conjugal yoke-fellow in your good old way; I am impatient to know if the Ailsa fowling be commenced for this season yet, as I want three or four stones of feathers, and I hope you will bespeak them for me. It would be a vain attempt for me to enumerate the various transactions I have been engaged in since I saw you last; but this know—I am engaged in a *smuggling trade*, and God knows if ever any poor man experienced better returns, two for one; but as freight and delivery have turned out so dear, I am thinking of taking out a license and beginning in fair trade. I have taken a farm on the borders of the Nith, and in imitation of the old Patriarchs, get men-servants and maid-servants, and flocks and herds, and beget sons and daughters.

Your obedient Nephew,

R. B.

No. CLIV.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

Mauchline, 21st May, 1789.

My dear Friend,

I was in the country by accident, and hearing of your safe arrival, I could not resist the temptation of wishing you joy on your return—wishing you would write to me before you sail again—wishing you would always set me down as your bosom friend—wishing you long life and prosperity, and that every good thing may attend you—wishing Mrs. Brown and your little ones as free of the evils of this world as is consistent with humanity—wishing you and she were to make two at the ensuing lying-in, with which Mrs. B. threatens very soon to favour me—wishing I had longer time to write to you at present; and, finally, wishing that, if there is to be another state of existence, Mr. B., Mrs. B., our little ones, and both families, and you and I, in some snug retreat, may make a jovial party to all eternity!

My direction is at Ellisland, near Dumfries.

Your's,

R. B.

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* [The poem on the Wounded Hare had also been sent by Burns to Dr. Gregory for his criticism.

The following is that gentleman's reply:—

Edinburgh, June 2nd, 1789.

"Dear Sir,

"I take the first leisure hour I could command to thank you for your letter, and the copy of verses enclosed in it. As there is real poetic merit, I mean both fancy and tenderness, and some happy expressions in them, I think they well deserve that you should revise them carefully, and polish them to the utmost. This, I am sure, you can do if you please, for you have great command both of expression and of rhymes; and you may judge from the two last pieces of Mrs. Hunter's poetry, that I gave you, how much correctness and high polish enhance the value of such compositions. As you desire it, I shall with great freedom give you my *most rigorous* criticisms on your verses. I wish you would give me another edition of them, much amended, and I will send it to Mrs. Hunter, who I am sure will have much pleasure in reading it. Pray give me likewise for myself, and her too, a copy (as much amended as you please) of the 'Water Fowl on Loch Turit.'"

Here follows the criticism, which is inserted after the poem itself—p. 285.]

† ["Mr. Cruikshank of the High School. We know a gentleman in mature life, who lived as boarder and pupil with Cruikshank, and to whom the character of the man, in consequence of the severity of his discipline, appeared in a very different light from what it did in the eyes of his boon-companion—Burns."—Chambers.]

‡ [Mr. William Dunbar, W. S.]

§ [Samuel Brown was brother to the poet's mother, and seems to have been a joyous and tolerant sort of person. He appears also to have been somewhat ignorant of the poet's motions, for the license to which he alludes was taken out nearly a twelvemonth before this letter was written.]

No. CLV.

TO Mr. JAMES HAMILTON.*

Ellisland, 26th May, 1789.

Dear Sir,

I send you by John Glover, Carrier, the above account for Mr. Turnbull, as I suppose you know his address.

I would fain offer, my dear Sir, a word of sympathy with your misfortunes; but it is a tender string, and I know not how to touch it. It is easy to flourish a set of high-flown sentiments on the subjects that would give great satisfaction to—a breast quite at ease; but as one observes, who was very seldom mistaken in the theory of life, "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith."

Among some distressful emergencies that I have experienced in life, I ever laid this down as my foundation of comfort—*That he who has lived the life of an honest man has by no means lived in vain!*

With every wish for your welfare and future success,

I am, my dear Sir,

Sincerely yours,

R. B.

No. CLVI.

TO WILLIAM CREECH, Esq.

Ellisland, 30th May, 1789.

Sir,

I had intended to have troubled you with a long letter, but at present the delightful sensations of an omnipotent tooth-ache so engross all my inner man as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense. However, as in duty bound, I approach my bookseller with an offering in my hand—a few poetic clinches, and a song:—To expect any other kind of offering from the Rhyming Tribe would be to know them much less than you do. I do not pretend that there is much merit in these *morceaux*, but I have two reasons for sending them; *primo*, they are mostly ill-natured, so are in unison with my present feelings, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are driving post from ear to ear along my jaw bones; and *secondly*, they are so short, that you cannot leave off in the middle, and so hurt my pride in the idea that you found any work of mine too heavy to get through.

I have a request to beg of you, and I not only beg of you, but conjure you, by all your wishes and by all your hopes, that the muse will spare the satiric wink in the moment of your foibles; that she will warble the song of rapture round your hymeneal couch; and that she will shed on your turf the honest tear of elegiac gratitude! Grant my request as speedily as possible—send me by the very first fly or coach for this place three copies of the last edition of my poems, which place to my account.

Now may the good things of prose, and the good things of verse, come among thy hands, until they be filled with the *good things of this life*, prayeth

R. B.†

No. CLVII.

TO Mr. M'AULEY,

OF DUMBARTON.

Ellisland, 4th June, 1789.

Dear Sir,

Though I am not without my fears respecting my fate at that grand, universal inquest of right and wrong, commonly called *The Last Day*, yet I trust there is one sin, which that arch-vagabond, Satan, who I understand is to be king's evidence, cannot throw in my teeth—I mean ingratitude. There is a certain pretty large quantum of kindness for which I remain, and, from inability, I fear must still remain, your debtor; but, though unable to repay the debt, I assure you, Sir, I shall ever warmly remember the obligation. It gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear by my old acquaintance, Mr. Kennedy, that you are, in immortal Allan's language, "Hale, and weel, and living;" and that your charming family are well, and promising to be an amiable and respectable addition to the company of performers, whom the Great Manager of the Drama of Man is bringing into action for the succeeding age.

With respect to my welfare, a subject in which you once warmly and effectively interested yourself, I am here in my old way, holding my plough, marking the growth of my

* [James Hamilton was a grocer in Glasgow, and interested himself early in the fame and fortunes of the poet. That he had not the success in life which his friend imagined he merited seems plain by this letter, and perhaps there are few who will not feel that Burns has, with uncommon delicacy, condoled with him in his misfortunes, and suggested a topic of consolation at once rational and religious.—Cunningham.]

† [The poetic address to "The Tooth-ache" seems to be the offspring of this period. The "venomed stang" was fully felt during the composition of the epistle: but no one, save a sufferer under this "hell of a' diseases," can sympathize in the expression that fifty troops of infernal spirits were driving post from ear to ear along his jaw-bones! This letter may be taken as another proof of the poet's desire to render himself acceptable to his friends: he seldom folded up one without enclosing in it, or inserting in one of the pages, a short poem or one of his sweetest lyrics.—Cunningham.]

corn, or the health of my dairy; and at times sauntering by the delightful windings of the Nith, on the margin of which I have built my humble domicile, praying for seasonable weather, or holding an intrigue with the Muses; the only gypsies with whom I have now any intercourse. As I am entered into the holy state of matrimony, I trust my face is turned completely Zion-ward; and as it is a rule with all honest fellows to repeat no grievances, I hope that the little poetic licences of former days will of course fall under the oblivious influence of some good-natured statute of celestial prescription. In my family devotion, which, like a good Presbyterian, I occasionally give to my household folks, I am extremely fond of the psalm, "Let not the errors of my youth," &c.; and that other; "Lo! children are God's heritage," &c.; in which last Mrs. Burns, who by the bye has a glorious "wood-note wild" at either old song or psalmody, joins me with the pathos of Handel's Messiah. R. B.

No. CLVIII.

TO Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, 8th June, 1789.

My dear Friend,

I am perfectly ashamed of myself when I look at the date of your last. It is not that I forget the friend of my heart and the companion of my peregrinations; but I have been condemned to drudgery beyond sufferance, though not, thank God, beyond redemption. I have had a collection of poems by a lady put into my hands to prepare them for the press; which horrid task, with sowing corn with my own hand, a parcel of masons, wrights, plasterers, &c., to attend to, roaming on business through Ayr-shire—all this was against me, and the very first dreadful article was of itself too much for me.

13th. I have not had a moment to spare from incessant toil since the 8th. Life, my dear Sir, is a serious matter. You know, by experience, that a man's individual self is a good deal, but believe me, a wife and family of children, whenever you have the honour to be a husband and a father, will shew you that your present and most anxious hours of solitude are spent on trifles. The welfare of those who are very dear to us, whose only support, hope, and stay we are—this, to a generous mind, is another sort of more important object of care than any concerns whatever which centre merely in the individual. On the other hand, let no young, unmarried, rake-helly dog among you make a song of his pretended liberty, and freedom from care. If the relations we stand in to king, country, kindred, and friends, be any thing but the visionary fancies of dreaming metaphysicians; if religion, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, humanity, and justice, be aught but empty sounds; then the man who may be said to live only for others, for the beloved, honourable female, whose tender faithful embrace endears life, and for the helpless little innocents who are to be the men and women, the worshippers of his God, the subjects of his king, and the support, nay the very vital existence of his country, in the ensuing age;—compare such a man with any fellow whatever, who, whether he bustle and push in business, among labourers, clerks, statesmen; or whether he roar and rant, and drink and sing in taverns—a fellow over whose grave no one will breathe a single heigh-ho, except from the cobweb-tie of what is called good fellowship—who has no view nor aim but what terminates in himself—if there be any grovelling earth-born wretch of our species, a renegado to common sense, who would fain believe that the noble creature man is no better than a sort of fungus, generated out of nothing, nobody knows how, and soon dissipating in nothing, nobody knows where; such a stupid beast, such a crawling reptile, might balance the foregoing unexaggerated comparison, but no one else would have the patience.

Forgive me, my dear Sir, for this long silence. *To make you amends,* I shall send you soon, and more encouraging still, without any postage, one or two rhymes of my later manufacture.* R. B.

No. CLIX.

TO Mr. M'MURDO.†

Ellisland, 19th June, 1789.

Sir:

A poet and a beggar are, in so many points of view, alike, that one might take them for the same individual character under different designations; were it not that though, with a trifling poetic license, most poets may be styled beggars, yet the converse of the proposition

* [This truly noble letter is worth a volume of sermons on domestic morality: he who wrote it spoke from his own experience, and no one has talked more wisely on the subject.]

† [John M'Murdo, of Drumlanrig, was one of Burns' firmest Nithsdale friends, and was united with others, at the poet's death, in the management of his affairs, which prospered so well that two hundred pounds per annum became the widow's portion for many years before she was laid in the grave. Burns was sensible of other charms at Drumlanrig than those of loveliness, wit, and a well-spread table: he admired the mansion, copied after the design of Inigo Jones—and more the winding Nith, which seems anxious at that place to become as picturesque as possible. The rushing river, the woody banks, the stately towers, and the lofty hills, all unite in rendering this one of the pleasantest spots in Upper Nithsdale.—Cunningham.]

does not hold—that every beggar is a poet. In one particular, however, they remarkably agree; if you help either the one or the other to a mug of ale, or the picking of a bone, they will very willingly repay you with a song. This occurs to me at present, as I have just despatched a well-lined rib of John Kirkpatrick's Highlander: a bargain for which I am indebted to you, in the style of our ballad printers, "Five excellent new songs." The enclosed is nearly my newest song, and one that has cost me some pains, though that is but an equivocal mark of its excellence. Two or three others, which I have by me, shall do themselves the honour to wait on your after leisure: petitioners for admittance into favour must not harass the condescension of their benefactor.

You see, Sir, what it is to patronise a poet. 'Tis like being a magistrate in a petty borough; you do them the favour to preside in their council for one year, and your name bears the prefatory stigma of Bailie for life.

With, not the compliments, but the best wishes, the sincerest prayers of the season for you, that you may see many and happy years with Mrs. M'Murdo, and your family; two blessings, by the bye, to which your rank does not, by any means, entitle you—a loving wife and fine family being almost the only good things of this life to which the farm-house and cottage have an exclusive right.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your much indebted and very humble servant,

R. B.

No. CLX.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 21st June, 1789.

Dear Madam:

Will you take the effusions, the miserable effusions of low spirits, just as they flow from their bitter spring? I know not of any particular cause for this worst of all my foes besetting me; but for some time my soul has been beclouded with a thickening atmosphere of evil imaginations and gloomy presages.

Monday Evening.

I have just heard Mr. Kirkpatrick preach a sermon. He is a man famous for his benevolence, and I revere him; but from such ideas of my Creator, good Lord, deliver me! Religion, my honoured friend, is surely a simple business, as it equally concerns the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich. That there is an incomprehensible Great Being, to whom I owe my existence, and that he must be intimately acquainted with the operations and progress of the internal machinery, and consequent outward deportment of this creature which he has made—these are, I think, self-evident propositions. That there is a real and eternal distinction between virtue and vice, and consequently, that I am an accountable creature; that from the seeming nature of the human mind, as well as from the evident imperfection, nay, positive injustice, in the administration of affairs, both in the natural and moral worlds, there must be a retributive scene of existence beyond the grave—must, I think, be allowed by every one who will give himself a moment's reflection. I will go farther, and affirm that, from the sublimity, excellence, and purity of his doctrine and precepts, unparalleled by all the aggregated wisdom and learning of many preceding ages, though, to *appearance*, he himself was the obscurest and most illiterate of our species—therefore Jesus Christ was from God.

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others, this is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity.

What think you, madam, of my creed? I trust that I have said nothing that will lessen me in the eye of one, whose good opinion I value almost next to the approbation of my own mind.

R. B.

No. CLXI.

TO Miss WILLIAMS.

Ellisland, August, 1789.

Madam:

Of the many problems in the nature of that wonderful creature, man, this is one of the most extraordinary, that he shall go on from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, or perhaps from year to year, suffering a hundred times more in an hour from the impotent consciousness of neglecting what he ought to do than the very doing of it would cost him. I am deeply indebted to you, first for a most elegant poetic compliment;* then, for a polite, obliging letter; and, lastly, for your excellent poem on the Slave-Trade; and yet, wretch that I am! though the debts were debts of honour, and the creditor a lady, I have put off and put off even the very acknowledgment of the obligation, until you must indeed be the very angel I take you for if you can forgive me.

Your poem I have read with the highest pleasure. I have a way whenever I read a book—I mean a book in our own trade, Madam, a poetic one—and when it is my own property, that I take a pencil and mark at the ends of verses, or note on margins and odd papers, little criti-

* [See Dr. Moore's letter of January 23d, 1787.]

cisms of approbation or disapprobation as I peruse along. I will make no apology for presenting you with a few unconnected thoughts that occurred to me in my repeated perusals of your poem. I want to shew you that I have honesty enough to tell you what I take to be truths, even when they are not quite on the side of approbation; and I do it in the firm faith that you have equal greatness of mind to hear them with pleasure.

I had lately the honour of a letter from Dr. Moore, where he tells me that he has sent me some books: they are not yet come to hand, but I hear they are on the way.

Wishing you all success in your progress in the path of fame; and that you may equally escape the danger of stumbling through incautious speed, or losing ground through loitering neglect,* I am, &c.

R. B.

No. CLXII.

TO Mr. JOHN LOGAN.†

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 7th Aug. 1789.

Dear Sir:

I intended to have written you long ere now, and as I told you I had gotten three stanzas and a half on my way in a poetic epistle to you; but that old enemy of all *good works*, the devil, threw me into a prosaic mire, and for the soul of me I cannot get out of it. I dare not write you a long letter, as I am going to intrude on your time with a long ballad. I have, as you will shortly see, finished "The Kirk's Alarm;" but now that is done, and that I have laughed once or twice at the conceits in some of the stanzas, I am determined not to let it get into the public; so I send you this copy, the first that I have sent to Ayr-shire, except some few of the stanzas, which I wrote off in embryo for Gavin Hamilton, under the express provision and request that you will only read it to a few of us, and do not on any account give, or permit to be taken, any copy of the ballad. If I could be of any service, to Dr. M'Gill, I would do it, though it should be at a much greater expense than irritating a few bigoted priests, but I am afraid serving him in his present *embarras* is a task too hard for me. I have enemies enow, God knows, though I do not wantonly add to the number. Still, as I think there is some merit in two or three of the thoughts, I send it to you as a small but sincere testimony how much, and with what respectful esteem,

I am, dear, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

R. B.‡

No. CLXIII.

TO Mr. ————.§

Ellisland, September, 1789.

My dear Sir,

The hurry of a farmer in this particular season, and the indolence of a poet at all times

* [The lady to whom this letter is addressed was the well known Helen Maria Williams—her answer is characteristic:—

"*7th August*, 1789.

"Dear Sir,

"I do not lose a moment in returning you my sincere acknowledgments for your letter, and your criticism on my poem, which is a very flattering proof that you have read it with attention. I think your objections are perfectly just, except in one instance.

"You have indeed been very profuse of panegyric on my little performance. A much less portion of applause from *you* would have been gratifying to me; since I think its value depends entirely upon the source whence it proceeds—the incense of praise, like other incense, is more grateful from the quality, than the quantity, of the odour.

"I hope you still cultivate the pleasures of poetry, which are precious even independent of the rewards of fame. Perhaps the most valuable property of poetry is its power of disengaging the mind from worldly cares, and leading the imagination to the richest springs of intellectual enjoyment; since, however frequently life may be chequered with gloomy scenes, those who truly love the Muse can always find one little path adorned with flowers and cheered by sunshine."]

† [Of Knockshinnock, in Glen Afton, Ayr-shire.]

‡ [An error into which the previous biographers of Burns have fallen is corrected by this letter. The "Kirk's Alarm" is neither an early production nor of western descent; it was composed at Ellisland with the hope of rendering some service to the Reverend Dr. M'Gill, against whom a cry of heresy had been raised—and not without reason. There are extant two copies of this satire in the poet's hand-writing; one is contained in the Afton MSS. and the other is in the collection of the daughter of the gentleman to whom this letter is addressed.—Cunningham,]

§ [The name of the gentleman to whom this letter is addressed has unfortunately been suppressed by Dr. Currie; this is the more to be lamented since he seems to have wanted neither talent nor spirit, as his letter, to which that of Burns is an answer, will sufficiently shew:

"*London, 5th August*, 1789.

"My dear Sir,

"Excuse me when I say that the uncommon abilities which you possess must render your correspondence very acceptable to any one. I can assure you, I am particularly proud of your partiality, and shall endeavour, by every method in my power, to merit a continuance of your politeness. * * * *

"When you can spare a few moments, I should be proud of a letter from you, directed for me, Gerrard-street, Soho.

"I cannot express my happiness sufficiently at the instance of your attachment to my late inestimable friend, Bob Fergusson [in the erection of a monument to him], who was particularly intimate with myself and relations. While I recollect with pleasure his extraordinary talents, and many amiable qualities, it affords me the greatest consolation that I am honoured with the correspondence of his successor in national simplicity and genius. That Mr. Burns has refined in the art of poetry must readily be admitted; but, notwithstanding many favourable representations, I am yet to learn that he inherits his convivial powers.

"There was such a richness of conversation, such a plenitude of fancy and attraction in him, that when I call the happy period of our intercourse to my memory, I feel myself in a state of delirium. I was then younger than him by eight or ten years; but his manner was so felicitous that he enraptured every person around him, and infused into the hearts of young and old the spirit which operated on his own mind."]

and seasons, will, I hope, plead my excuse for neglecting so long to answer your obliging letter of the 5th of August.

That you have done well in quitting your laborious concern in * * * I do not doubt; the weighty reasons you mention were, I hope, very, and deservedly indeed, weighty ones, and your health is a matter of the last importance; but whether the remaining proprietors of the paper have also done well is what I much doubt. The * * *, so far as I was a reader, exhibited such a brilliancy of point, such an elegance of paragraph, and such a variety of intelligence, that I can hardly conceive it possible to continue a daily paper in the same degree of excellence: but if there was a man who had abilities equal to the task, that man's assistance the proprietors have lost.

When I received your letter I was transcribing for * * * my letter to the magistrates of the Canongate, Edinburgh, begging their permission to place a tomb-stone over poor Fergusson, and their edict in consequence of my petition, but now I shall send them to * * * *. Poor Fergusson! If there be a life beyond the grave, which I trust there is; and if there be a good God presiding over all nature, which I am sure there is; thou art now enjoying existence in a glorious world, where worth of the heart alone is distinction in the man; where riches, deprived of all their pleasure-purchasing powers, return to their native sordid matter; where titles and honours are the disregarded reveries of an idle dream: and where that heavy virtue, which is the negative consequence of steady dulness, and those thoughtless, though often destructive, follies, which are the unavoidable aberrations of frail human nature, will be thrown into equal oblivion as if they had never been!

Adieu, my dear Sir! So soon as your present views and schemes are concentrated in an aim, I shall be glad to hear from you; as your welfare and happiness is by no means a subject indifferent to

Yours, R. B.

No. CLXIV.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 6th Sept. 1789.

Dear Madam,

I have mentioned in my last my appointment to the Excise, and the birth of little Frank; who, by the bye, I trust will be no discredit to the honourable name of Wallace,* as he has a fine manly countenance, and a figure that might do credit to a little fellow two months older; and likewise an excellent good temper, though when he pleases he has a pipe only not quite so loud as the horn that his immortal name-sake blew as a signal to take out the pin of Stirling bridge.

I had some time ago an epistle, part poetic, and part prosaic, from your poetess, Mrs. J. Little, a very ingenious, but modest composition.† I should have written her as she re-

* [This child, named Francis Wallace, after Mrs. Dunlop, died at the early age of fourteen. He is described as having been, to all appearance, the most promising of all Burns's children.]

† [The poetic Epistle from Miss Janet Little was ushered in by the following account of herself:—

"*Loudon House, 12th July*, 1789.

"Sir,

"Though I have not the happiness of being personally acquainted with you, yet amongst the number of those who have read and admired your publications, may I be permitted to trouble you with this? You must know, Sir, I am somewhat in love with the Muses, though I cannot boast of any favours they have deigned to confer upon me as yet; my situation in life has been very much against me as to that. I have spent some years in and about Ecclefechan (where my parents reside), in the station of a servant, and am now come to Loudon House, at present possessed by Mrs. H——; she is daughter to Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop, whom I understand you are particularly acquainted with. As I had the pleasure of perusing your poems, I felt a partiality for the author, which I should not have experienced had you been in a more dignified station. I wrote a few verses of address to you, which I did not then think of ever presenting; but as fortune seems to have favoured me in this, by bringing me into a family by whom you are well known, and much esteemed, and where, perhaps, I may have an opportunity of seeing you; I shall, in hopes of your future friendship, take the liberty to transcribe them.

I.
Fair fa' the honest rustic swain,
The pride o' a' our Scottish plain;
Thou gi'es us joy to hear thy strain,
And notes sae sweet;
Old Ramsay's shade reviv'd again
In thee we greet.

II.
Lov'd Thalia, that delightfu' muse,
Seem'd lang shut up as a recluse;
To all she did her aid refuse,
Since Allan's day;
'Till Burns arose, then did she chuse
To grace his lay.

III.
To hear thy sang all ranks desire,
Sae weel you strike the dormant lyre,
Apollo with poetic fire
Thy breast doth warm,
And critics silently admire
Thy art to charm.

IV.
Cæsar and Luath weel can speak,
'Tis pity e'er their gabs should steek,
But into human nature keek,
And knots unravel;
To hear their lectures once a week,
Nine miles I'd travel.

V.
Thy dedication to G. H.,
An unco bonnie hame-spun speech,
Wi' winsome glee the heart can teach
A better lesson
Than servile bards, who fawn and fleech,
Like beggar's messon.

VI.
When slighted love becomes your theme,
And woman's faithless vows you blame,
With so much pathos you exclaim
In your Lament;
But glanc'd by the most frigid dame,
She would relent.

quested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country; and I am happy to add, always to the honour of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her: I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to stain. I am no dab at fine-drawn letter-writing; and, except when prompted by friendship or gratitude, or, which happens extremely rarely, inspired by the Muse (I know not her name) that presides over epistolary writing, I sit down, when necessitated to write, as I would sit down to beat hemp.

Some parts of your letter of the 20th August struck me with the most melancholy concern for the state of your mind at present.

Would I could write you a letter of comfort; I would sit down to it with as much pleasure as I would to write an epic poem, of my own composition, that should equal the *Iliad*. Religion, my dear friend, is the true comfort! A strong persuasion in a future state of existence; a proposition so obviously probable that, setting revelation aside, every nation and people, so far as investigation has reached, for at least near four thousand years, have, in some mode or other, firmly believed it. In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt. I have myself done so to a very daring pitch; but when I reflected that I was opposing the most ardent wishes and the most darling hopes of good men, and flying in the face of all human belief in all ages, I was shocked at my own conduct.

I know not whether I have ever sent you the following lines, or if you have ever seen them; but it is one of my favourite quotations, which I keep constantly by me in my progress through life, in the language of the book of Job,

"Against the day of battle and of war"—

spoken of religion:

"'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,
'Tis *this* that gilds the horror of our night.
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis this that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels his dart;
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I have been busy with *Zeluco*. The Doctor is so obliging as to request my opinion of it; and I have been revolving in my mind some kind of criticisms on novel-writing, but it is a depth beyond my research. I shall however digest my thoughts on the subject as well as I can. *Zeluco* is a most sterling performance.

Farewell! *A Dieu, le bon Dieu, je vous commende!*

R. B.

No. CLXV.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL,

CARSE.

Ellisland, 16th Oct. 1789.

SIR,

BIG with the idea of this important day at Friar's Carse, I have watched the elements and skies, in the full persuasion that they would announce it to the astonished world by some phenomena of terrific portent. — Yesternight until a very late hour did I wait with anxious horror, for the appearance of some Comet firing half the sky; or aërial armies of sanguinary Scandinavians, darting athwart the startled heavens, rapid as the ragged lightning, and horrid as those convulsions of nature that bury nations.

The elements, however, seem to take the matter very quietly: they did not even usher in this morning with triple suns and a shower of blood, symbolical of the three potent heroes, and the mighty claret-shed of the day.—For me, as Thomson in his Winter says of the storm—I shall "Hear astonished, and astonished sing"

The whistle and the man; I sing
The man that won the whistle, &c.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys I trow are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold coward loun is he;
Wha *last* beside his chair shall fa'
He is the king amang us three.

VII.

The daisy, too, ye sing wi' skill;
And weel ye praise the whiskey gill;
In vain I blunt my feckless quill,
Your fame to raise;
While echo sounds frae ilka hill,
To Burns's praise.

VIII.

Did Addison or Pope but hear,
Or Sam, that critic most severe,
A ploughboy sing wi' throat sae clear,
They, in a rage,
Their works would a' in pieces tear,
An' curse your page.

IX.

Sure Milton's eloquence were faint,
The beauties of your verse to paint:
My rude unpolish'd strokes but taint
Their brilliancy;
Th' attempt would doubtless vex a saint,
And weel may thee.

X.

The task I'll drop, wi' heart sincere,
To Heaven present my humble pray'r,
That all the blessings mortals share,
May be by turns
Dispens'd by an indulgent care
To ROBERT BURNS!]

To leave the heights of Parnassus and come to the humble vale of prose —I have some misgivings that I take too much upon me, when I request you to get your guest, Sir Robert Lawrie, to frank the two enclosed covers for me, the one of them, to Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, Bart., at Kilmarnock,—the other, to Mr. Allan Masterton, Writing-Master, Edinburgh. The first has a kindred claim on Sir Robert, as being a brother Baronet, and likewise a keen Foxite; the other is one of the worthiest men in the world, and a man of real genius; so, allow me to say he has a fraternal claim on you. I want them franked for to-morrow, as I cannot get them to the post to-night.—I shall send a servant again for them in the evening. Wishing that your head may be crowned with laurels to-night, and free from aches to-morrow,

I have the honour to be, Sir.

Your deeply indebted humble Servant,

R. B.*

No. CLXVI.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL.

Ellisland, 1789.

SIR,

I WISH from my inmost soul it were in my power to give you a more substantial gratification and return for all the goodness to the poet, than transcribing a few of his idle rhymes.—However, "an old song," though to a proverb an instance of insignificance, is generally the only coin a poet has to pay with.

If my poems which I have transcribed, and mean still to transcribe into your book, were equal to the grateful respect and high esteem I bear for the gentleman to whom I present them, they would be the finest poems in the language. —As they are, they will at least be a testimony with what sincerity I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your devoted humble Servant,

R. B.

No. CLXVII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, 1*st Nov.* 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD written you long ere now, could I have guessed where to find you, for I am sure you have more good sense than to waste the precious days of vacation time in the dirt of business and Edinburgh.—Wherever you are, God bless you, and lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil!

I do not know if I have informed you that I am now appointed to an Excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. In this I was extremely lucky. Without ever having been an expectant, as they call their journeymen excisemen, I was directly planted down to all intents and purposes an officer of excise; there to flourish and bring forth fruits —worthy of repentance.

I know not how the word exciseman, or still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow is no bad settlement for a *poet*. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable, audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock.—"Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the Crown, and consequently with us an honest fellow has the surest chance of preferment."

You need not doubt that I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business; but I am tired with and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. Human existence in the most favourable situations does not abound with pleasures, and has its inconveniences and ills; capricious foolish man mistakes these inconveniences and ills as if they were the peculiar property of his particular situation; and hence that eternal fickleness, that love of change, which has ruined, and daily does ruin many a fine fellow, as well as many a blockhead, and is almost, without exception, a constant source of disappointment and misery.

I long to hear from you how you go on—not so much in business as in life. Are you pretty well satisfied with your own exertions, and tolerably at ease in your internal reflections? 'Tis much to be a great character as a lawyer, but beyond comparison more to be a great character as a man. That you may be both the one and the other is the earnest wish, and that you *will* be both is the firm persuasion of,

My dear Sir, &c. R. B.

* [The bard seems to have prepared himself for celebrating a contest which did not take place for a year afterwards. The whistle was contended for 16th Oct. 1790: the successful competitor, Fergusson, of Craigdarroch, was killed by a fall from his horse, many years after this jovial contest; he excelled in ready eloquence, and loved witty company.—CUNNINGHAM.

See the Poem of "The Whistle" page 307.]

No. CLXVIII.

TO Mr. RICHARD BROWN.

Ellisland, 4th November, 1789.

I HAVE been so hurried, my ever dear friend, that though I got both your letters, I have not been able to command an hour to answer them as I wished; and even now you are to look on this as merely confessing debt, and craving days. Few things could have given me so much pleasure as the news that you were once more safe and sound on terra firma, and happy in that place where happiness is alone to be found, in the fire-side circle. May the benevolent Director of all things peculiarly bless you in all those endearing connections consequent on the tender and venerable names of husband and father! I have indeed been extremely lucky in getting an additional income of £50 a year, while, at the same time, the appointment will not cost me above £10 or £12 per annum of expenses more than I must have inevitably incurred. The worst circumstance is that the Excise division which I have got is so extensive, no less than ten parishes to ride over; and it abounds besides with so much business that I can scarcely steal a spare moment. However, labour endears rest, and both together are absolutely necessary for the proper enjoyment of human existence. I cannot meet you any where. No less than an order from the Board of Excise, at Edinburgh, is necessary before I can have so much time as to meet you in Ayr-shire. But do you come, and see me. We must have a social day, and perhaps lengthen it out with half the night, before you go again to sea. You are the earliest friend I now have on earth, my brothers excepted: and is not that an endearing circumstance? When you and I first met, we were at the green period of human life. The twig would easily take a bent, but would as easily return to its former state. You and I not only took a mutual bent, but, by the melancholy, though strong influence of being both of the family of the unfortunate, we were entwined with one another in our growth towards advanced age; and blasted be the sacrilegious hand that shall attempt to undo the union! You and I must have one bumper to my favourite toast, "May the companions of our youth be the friends of our old age!" Come and see me one year; I shall see you at Port Glasgow the next, and if we can contrive to have a gossiping between our two bed-fellows, it will be so much additional pleasure. Mrs. Burns joins me in kind compliments to you and Mrs. Brown. Adieu!

I am ever, my dear Sir, yours,

R. B.

No. CLXIX.

TO R. GRAHAM, Esq.

OF FINTRAY.

9th December, 1789.

SIR:

I HAVE a good while had a wish to trouble you with a letter, and had certainly done it long ere now—but for a humiliating something that throws cold water on the resolution, as if one should say, "You have found Mr. Graham a very powerful and kind friend indeed, and that interest he is so kindly taking in your concerns you ought, by every thing in your power to keep alive and cherish." Now, though since God has thought proper to make one powerful and another helpless, the connection of obliger and obliged is all fair: and though my being under your patronage is to me highly honourable, yet, Sir, allow me to flatter myself that, as a poet and an honest man, you first interested yourself in my welfare, and principally as such still you permit me to approach you.

I have found the excise business go on a great deal smoother with me than I expected; owing a good deal to the generous friendship of Mr. Mitchell, my collector, and the kind assistance of Mr. Findlater, my supervisor. I dare to be honest, and I fear no labour. Nor do I find my hurried life greatly inimical to my correspondence with the Muses. Their visits to me, indeed, and I believe to most of their acquaintance, like the visits of good angels, are short and far between: but I meet them now and then, as I jog through the hills of Nithsdale, just as I used to do on the banks of Ayr. I take the liberty to inclose you a few bagatelles, all of them the productions of my leisure thoughts in my excise rides.

If you know, or have ever seen, Captain Grose, the antiquarian, you will enter into any humour that is in the verses on him. Perhaps you have seen them before, as I sent them to a London Newspaper. Though I dare say you have none of the solemn-league-and-covenant fire, which shone so conspicuous in Lord George Gordon, and the Kilmarnock weavers, yet I think you must have heard of Dr. M'Gill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book. God help him, poor man! Though he is one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest, of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor Doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter-winds. The enclosed ballad on that business is, I confess, too local, but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced in my conscience that there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too.

The election ballad, as you will see, alludes to the present canvass in our string of boroughs.

I do not believe there will be such a hard run match in the whole general election.

I am too little a man to have any political attachments; I am deeply indebted to, and have the warmest veneration for, individuals of both parties; but a man who has it in his power to be the father of a country, and who * * *, is a character that one cannot speak of with patience.*

Sir J. J. does "what man can do," but yet I doubt his fate.†

No. CLXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 13th December, 1789.

MANY thanks, dear Madam, for your sheetful of rhymes. Though at present I am below the veriest prose, yet from you every thing pleases. I am groaning under the miseries of a diseased nervous system; a system, the state of which is most conducive to our happiness—or the most productive of our misery. For now near three weeks I have been so ill with a nervous head-ache that I have been obliged for a time to give up my excise-books, being scarce able to lift my head, much less to ride once a week over ten muir parishes. What is man?—To-day, in the luxuriance of health, exulting in the enjoyment of existence; in a few days, perhaps in a few hours, loaded with conscious painful being, counting the tardy pace of the lingering moments by the repercussions of anguish, and refusing or denied a comforter. Day follows night, and night comes after day, only to curse him with life which gives him no pleasure; and yet the awful, dark termination of that life is something at which he recoils.

> "Tell us, ye dead; will none of you in pity
> Disclose the secret——————
> *What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?*
> —————— 'tis no matter,
> A little time will make us learn'd as you are."

Can it be possible that, when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence? When the last grasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those that knew me, and the few who loved me; when the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod, shall I be yet warm in life, seeing and seen, enjoying and enjoyed? Ye venerable sages, and holy flamens, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death; or are they all alike, baseless visions, and fabricated fables? If there is another life, it must be only for the just, the benevolent, the amiable, and the humane; what a flattering idea, then, is a world to come! Would to God I as firmly believed it as I ardently wish it! There I should meet an aged parent, now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world, against which he so long and so bravely struggled. There should I meet the friend, the disinterested friend of my early life; the man who rejoiced to see me, because he loved me and could serve me.—Muir,‡ thy weaknesses were the aberrations of human nature, but thy heart glowed with every thing generous, manly, and noble; and if ever emanation from the All-good Being animated a human form, it was thine!—There should I, with speechless agony of rapture, again recognize my lost, my ever dear Mary! whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love.

> "My Mary, dear departed shade!
> Where is thy place of heavenly rest?
> Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
> Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"

Jesus Christ, thou amiablest of characters! I trust thou art no impostor, and that thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave is not one of the many impositions which time after time have been palmed on credulous mankind. I trust that in thee "shall all the families of the earth be blessed," by being yet connected together in a better world, where every tie that bound heart to heart, in this state of existence, shall be, far beyond our present conceptions, more endearing.

I am a good deal inclined to think with those who maintain that what are called nervous affections are in fact diseases of the mind. I cannot reason, I cannot think; and but to you I would not venture to write any thing above an order to a cobbler. You have felt too much of the ills of life not to sympathise with a diseased wretch, who has impaired more than half of any faculties he possessed. Your goodness will excuse this distracted scrawl, which the

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* [Dr. Currie has here obviously suppressed a bitter allusion to the Duke of Queensberry.]

† [In this letter, besides the verses on Grose, the poet enclosed the Kirk's Alarm, and the first ballad on Miller's election. His heart seems to have been with Johnstone in the latter affair; he cordially disliked the Duke of Queensberry, a nobleman who herried the land which he ought to have enriched, and squandered his rents among

"Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera girls."

Captain Miller, the candidate in the Queensberry interest and son of the poet's landlord, was a Whig—yet this seems not to have overcome Burns's aversion to old Q., a name under which the caricaturists of London loved to lampoon the person of his Grace.—See "Verses on the Destruction of the Woods of Drumlanrig," and "Lines on the Duke of Queensberry," pages 290-1.]

‡ [Muir, so feelingly alluded to in this letter, was one of the poet's earliest and least assuming friends—he was mild and benevolent, and did deeds of kindness without seeming to do them.]

writer dare scarcely read, and which he would throw into the fire, were he able to write any thing better, or indeed any thing at all.

Rumour told me something of a son of yours who was returned from the East or West Indies. If you have gotten news from James or Anthony, it was cruel in you not to let me know; as I promise you, on the sincerity of a man, who is weary of one world, and anxious about another, that scarce any thing could give me so much pleasure as to hear of any good thing befalling my honoured friend.

If you have a minute's leisure, take up your pen in pity to *le pauvre miserable*, R. B.

No. CLXXI.

TO LADY W[INIFRED] M[AXWELL] CONSTABLE.*

Ellisland, 16th December, 1789.

My Lady:

In vain have I from day to day expected to hear from Mrs. Young, as she promised me at Dalswinton that she would do me the honour to introduce me at Tinwald; and it was impossible, not from your ladyship's accessibility, but from my own feelings, that I could go alone. Lately, indeed, Mr. Maxwell of Carruchen in his usual goodness offered to accompany me, when an unlucky indisposition on my part hindered my embracing the opportunity. To court the notice or the tables of the great, except where I sometimes have had a little matter to ask of them, or more often the pleasanter task of witnessing my gratitude to them, is what I never have done, and I trust never shall do. But with your ladyship I have the honour to be connected by one of the strongest and most endearing ties in the whole moral world. Common sufferers, in a cause where even to be unfortunate is glorious, the cause of heroic loyalty! Though my fathers had not illustrious honours and vast properties to hazard in the contest, though they left their humble cottages only to add so many units more to the unnoted crowd that followed their leaders, yet what they could they did, and what they had they lost: with unshaken firmness and unconcealed political attachments, they shook hands with ruin for what they esteemed the cause of their king and their country. This language and the enclosed verses† are for your ladyship's eye alone. Poets are not very famous for their prudence: but as I can do nothing for a cause which is now nearly no more, I do not wish to hurt myself. I have the honour to be, my lady, your ladyship's obliged and obedient humble servant,

R. B.

No. CLXXII.

TO PROVOST MAXWELL,

OF LOCHMABEN.

Ellisland, 20th December, 1789.

Dear Provost,

As my friend Mr. Graham goes for your good town to-morrow, I cannot resist the temptation to send you a few lines, and as I have nothing to say, I have chosen this sheet of foolscap, and begun as you see at the top of the first page, because I have ever observed that when once people have fairly set out they know not where to stop. Now that my first sentence is concluded, I have nothing to do but to pray heaven to help me on to another. Shall I write you on Politics or Religion, two master subjects for your sayers of nothing? Of the first I dare say by this time you are nearly surfeited;‡ and for the last, whenever they may talk of it who make it a kind of company concern, I never could endure it beyond a soliloquy. I might write you on farming, on building, on marketing, but my poor distracted mind is so torn, so jaded, so racked and bedeviled with the task of the superlatively damned to make *one guinea do the business of three*, that I detest, abhor, and swoon at the very word business, though no less than four letters of my very short surname are in it.

Well, to make the matter short, I shall betake myself to a subject ever fruitful of themes; a subject the turtle feast of the sons of Satan, and the delicious secret sugar plum of the babes of grace — a subject sparkling with all the jewels that wit can find in the mines of genius; and pregnant with all the stores of learning from Moses and Confucius to Franklin and Priestley—in short, may it please your Lordship, I intend to write * * *

[*Here the Poet inserted a song which can only be sung at times when the Punch Bowl has done its duty and wild wit is set free.*]

If at any time you expect a field-day§ in your town, a day when Dukes, Earls, and Knights pay their court to weavers, tailors, and cobblers, I should like to know of it two or three days before hand. It is not that I care

* [Representative of the ancient family of Nithsdale.]

† [Those addressed to Mr. William Tytler.—See p. 278. The above interesting letter first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's Edition of the Poet's works. It was communicated by Sir Cuthbert Sharpe, Provost of Sunderland.]

‡ [The Provost, as the leading voter in Marjorie of the Mony Lochs, must have recently had a sufficiency of politics.]

§ [The Miller and Johnstone contest at that time agitated the Boroughs, and to this the poet alludes when he requests to receive notice of a field-day among the chief men of the district.]

three skips of a cur dog for the politics, but I should like to see such an exhibition of human nature. If you meet with that worthy old veteran in religion and good fellowship, Mr. Jeffrey,* or any of his amiable family, I beg you will give them my best compliments.†

R. B.

No. CLXXIII.

TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR.

1790.

Sir,

The following circumstance has, I believe, been omitted in the statistical account, transmitted to you, of the parish of Dunscore, in Nithsdale. I beg leave to send it to you, because it is new, and may be useful. How far it is deserving of a place in your patriotic publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge is certainly of very great importance, both to them as individuals, and to society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection is giving them a source of innocent and laudable amusement; and besides, raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality. Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddel, Esq., of Glenriddel, set on foot a species of circulating library, on a plan so simple as to be practicable in any corner of the country; and so useful as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species, whom chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artizan, a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddel got a number of his own tenants and farming neighbours to form themselves into a society for the purpose of having a library among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement to abide by it for three years; with a saving clause or two, in case of a removal to a distance, or death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings; and at each of their meetings, which were held every fourth Saturday, sixpence more. With their entry-money, and the credit which they took on the faith of their future funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase was always decided by the majority. At every meeting, all the books, under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation. He whose name stood for that night first on the list had his choice of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his choice after the first; the third after the second, and so on to the last. At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding meeting was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement, the books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves; each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as he chose to be a purchaser or not.

At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddel's patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes. It will easily be guessed that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library, were *Blair's Sermons, Robertson's History of Scotland, Hume's History of the Stuarts, The Spectator, Idler, Adventurer, Mirror, Lounger, Observer, Man of Feeling, Man of the World, Chrysal, Don Quixote, Joseph Andrews, &c.* A peasant who can read and enjoy such books is certainly a much superior being to his neighbour, who perhaps stalks beside his team, very little removed, except in shape, from the brutes he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much merited success,

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

A Peasant.‡

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* [The Reverend Andrew Jeffrey, Minister of Lochmaben, and father of the heroine of that exquisite song "The Blue eyed Lass." His son, Hugh Jeffrey, is a worthy person and skilful with the pen—yet one nevertheless

"Whom fortune uses hard and sharp."]

† [The original of this letter is in the possession of Mr. Henderson, of Langholm, and from the singular song which it contains cannot but be considered as a great curiosity.]

‡ [The above letter is inserted in the third volume of Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, p. 598.—It was enclosed to Sir John by Mr. Riddel himself in the following letter:—

"Sir John,

"I enclose you a letter, written by Mr. Burns, as an addition to the account of Dunscore parish. It contains an account of a small library which he was so good (at my desire) as to set on foot, in the barony of Monkland, or Friar's Carse, in this parish. As its utility has been felt, particularly among the younger class of people, I think that if a similar plan were established in the different parishes of Scotland it would tend greatly to the speedy improvement of the tenantry, trades-people, and work-people. Mr. Burns was so good as to take the whole charge of this small concern. He was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to our little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit and exertions for their improvement and information.

I have the honour to be, Sir John,

Your's most sincerely,

Robert Riddel."]

No. CLXXIV.

TO CHARLES SHARPE, Esq.

OF HODDAM,*

Under a fictitious Signature, enclosing a Ballad. 1790 *or* 1791.

It is true, Sir, you are a gentleman of rank and fortune, and I am a poor devil: you are a feather in the cap of Society, and I am a very hobnail in his shoes; yet I have the honour to belong to the same family with you, and on that score I now address you. You will perhaps suspect that I am going to claim affinity with the ancient and honourable house of Kirkpatrick: No, no, Sir: I cannot indeed be properly said to belong to any house, or even any province or kingdom; as my mother, who for many years was spouse to a marching regiment, gave me into this bad world aboard the packet-boat, somewhere beetween Donaghadee and Portpatrick. By our common family, I mean, Sir, the family of the Muses. I am a fiddler and a poet; and you, I am told, play an exquisite violin, and have a standard taste in the Belles Lettres. The other day, a brother catgut gave me a charming Scots air of your composition. If I was pleased with the tune, I was in raptures with the title you have given it; and, taking up the idea, I have spun it into the three stanzas enclosed. Will you allow me, Sir, to present you them, as the dearest offspring that a misbegotten son of poverty and rhyme has to give? I have a longing to take you by the hand and unburthen my heart by saying, "Sir, I honour you as a man who supports the dignity of human nature, amid an age when frivolity and avarice have, between them, debased us below the brutes that perish!" But, alas, Sir! to me you are unapproachable. It is true, the Muses baptized me in Castalian streams, but the thoughtless gipsies forgot to give me a name. As the sex have served many a good fellow, the Nine have given me a great deal of pleasure, but, bewitching jades! they have beggared me. Would they but spare me a little of their castlinen! Were it only in my power to say that I have a shirt on my back! But the idle wenches, like Solomon's lilies, "they toil not, neither do they spin;" so I must e'en continue to tie my remnant of a cravat, like the hangman's rope, round my naked throat, and coax my galligaskins to keep together their many-coloured fragments. As to the affair of shoes, I have given that up. My pilgrimages in my ballad-trade, from town to town, and on your stony-hearted turnpikes too, are what not even the hide of Job's behemoth could bear. The coat on my back is no more: I shall not speak evil of the dead. It would be equally unhandsome and ungrateful to find fault with my old surtout, which so kindly supplies and conceals the want of that coat. My hat indeed is a great favourite; and though I got it literally for an old song, I would not exchange it for the best beaver in Britain. I was, during several years, a kind of fac-totum servant to a country clergyman, where I pickt up a good many scraps of learning, particularly in some branches of the mathematics. Whenever I feel inclined to rest myself on my way, I take my seat under a hedge, laying my poetic wallet on the one side, and my fiddle-case on the other, and, placing my hat between my legs, I can by means of its brim, or rather brims, go through the whole doctrine of the Conic Sections.

However, Sir, don't let me mislead you, as if I would interest your pity. Fortune has so much forsaken me that she has taught me to live without her; and, amid all my rags and poverty, I am as independent, and much more happy than a monarch of the world. According to the hackneyed metaphor, I value the several actors in the great drama of life simply as they act their parts. I can look on a worthless fellow of a duke with unqualified contempt, and can regard an honest scavenger with sincere respect. As you, Sir, go through your rôle with such distinguished merit, permit me to make one in the chorus of universal applause, and assure you that with the highest respect,

I have the honour to be, &c.

No. CLXXV.

TO Mr. GILBERT BURNS.

Ellisland, 11th January, 1790.

Dear Brother,

I mean to take advantage of the frank, though I have not in my present frame of mind much appetite for exertion in writing. My

* [The family of Hoddam is one of old standing in the county of Dumfries; it has mingled blood with some of the noblest names in the south of Scotland, and is at present worthily represented by General Sharpe, Member of Parliament for the five boroughs. Nor is the name known through that alone; my friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is distinguished by his scholarship and genius, by his critical knowledge both in literature and art, and by a wit terse and keen. The poet in this humorous letter seriously alludes to the connexion between his correspondent and the Knight of Closeburn—and, what was still more welcome, perhaps, congratulates him on his being able to reckon kin with the Muses. Charles Sharpe of Hoddam had not only fine taste in musical composition, but wrote verses with a happiness which justified, I am told, the commendations of Burns.—Cunningham.

He was the father of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., the friend of Sir Walter Scott, and a contributor of Original Ballad Poetry to the Border Minstrelsy.—Chambers.]

nerves are in a cursed state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul. This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair on all hands. But let it go to hell! I'll fight it out and be off with it.

We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now. I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On New-year-day evening I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause.

[The Poet here inserts the Prologue spoken at the theatre, Dumfries, on New-year-day evening, for which See page 287.]

I can no more.—If once I was clear of this cursed farm, I should respire more at ease.*

R. B.

No. CLXXVI.

TO WILLIAM DUNBAR, W.S.

Ellisland, 14th January, 1790.

Since we are here creatures of a day, since "a few summer days, and a few winter nights, and the life of man is at an end," why, my dear much-esteemed Sir, should you and I let negligent indolence, for I know it is nothing worse, step in between us and bar the enjoyment of a mutual correspondence? We are not shapen out of the common, heavy, methodical clod, the elemental stuff of the plodding selfish race, the sons of Arithmetic and Prudence; our feelings and hearts are not benumbed and poisoned by the cursed influence of riches, which, whatever blessing they may be in other respects, are no friends to the nobler qualities of the heart: in the name of random sensibility, then, let never the moon change on our silence any more. I have had a tract of bad health most part of this winter, else you had heard from me long ere now. Thank Heaven, I am now got so much better as to be able to partake a little in the enjoyments of life.

Our friend, Cunningham, will perhaps have told you of my going into the Excise. The truth is, I found it a very convenient business to have £50 per annum, nor have I yet felt any of these mortifying circumstances in it that I was led to fear.

Feb. 2d.—I have not, for sheer hurry of business, been able to spare five minutes to finish my letter. Besides my farm business, I ride on my Excise matters at least 200 miles every week. I have not by any means given up the Muses. You will see in the 3d. vol. of Johnson's Scots songs that I have contributed my mite there.

But, my dear Sir, little ones that look up to you for paternal protection are an important charge. I have already two fine healthy stout little fellows, and I wish to throw some light upon them. I have a thousand reveries and schemes about them, and their future destiny. Not that I am an Utopian projector in these things. I am resolved never to breed up a son of mine to any of the learned professions. I know the value of independence; and since I cannot give my sons an independent fortune, I shall give them an independent line of life. What a chaos of hurry, chance, and changes is this world, when one sits soberly down to reflect on it! To a father, who himself knows the world, the thought that he shall have sons to usher into it must fill him with dread; but if he have daughters, the prospect in a thoughtful moment is apt to shock him.

I hope Mrs. Fordyce and the two young ladies are well. Do let me forget that they are nieces of yours, and let me say that I never saw a more interesting, sweeter pair of sisters in my life. I am the fool of my feelings and attachments. I often take up a volume of my Spenser to realise you to my imagination,† and think over the social scenes we have had together. God grant that there may be another world more congenial to honest fellows beyond this. A world where these rubs and plagues of absence, distance, misfortunes, ill health, &c., shall no more damp hilarity and divide friendship. This I know is your throng season, but half a page will much oblige, my dear Sir, yours sincerely,

R. B.†

No. CLXXVII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 25th January, 1790.

It has been owing to unremitting hurry of business that I have not written to you, Madam, long ere now. My health is greatly better,

* ["The best laid schems of mice and men," says the bard, "gang aft agley," and surely no speculation in which Burns ever engaged promised more comfort to his bosom, and abundance to his board, than did the leasing of Ellisland. Yet the farm was undoubtedly too high rented during the period of his occupation, and he probably had not the skill or the patience to enable him to cultivate ground with the peculiar nature of which he was unacquainted. Soon after he forsook it, the half of Ellisland was let to a neighbouring farmer for the same rent which the poet gave for the whole; but then it must be remembered that the prospect of hostilities with France had raised the price of grain and the value of ground. Land which let with difficulty at ten shillings per acre in 1788, was leased with ease at three pounds in the course of a few years.—Cunningham.]

† [The Poet here alludes to a present of Spenser's Poems, which Mr. Dunbar had previously made him.

The above interesting letter was communicated by Mr. P. Buchan, of Aberdeen, and first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's Edition of the Poet's works.]

and I now begin once more to share in satisfaction and enjoyment with the rest of my fellow-creatures.

Many thanks, my much esteemed friend, for your kind letters; but why will you make me run the risk of being contemptible and mercenary in my own eyes? When I pique myself on my independent spirit, I hope it is neither poetic license, nor poetic rant; and I am so flattered with the honour you have done me, in making me your compeer in friendship and friendly correspondence, than I cannot without pain, and a degree of mortification, be reminded of the real inequality between our situations.

Most sincerely do I rejoice with you, dear Madam, in the good news of Anthony. Not only your anxiety about his fate, but my own esteem for such a noble, warm-hearted, manly young fellow, in the little I had of his acquaintance, has interested me deeply in his fortunes.

Falconer, the unfortunate author of the "Shipwreck," which you so much admire, is no more. After witnessing the dreadful catastrophe he so feelingly describes in his poem, and after weathering many hard gales of fortune, he went to the bottom with the Aurora frigate!

I forget what part of Scotland had the honour of giving him birth; but he was the son of obscurity and misfortune. He was one of those daring adventurous spirits which Scotland, beyond any other country, is remarkable for producing.* Little does the fond mother think, as she hangs delighted over the sweet little leech at her bosom, where the poor fellow may hereafter wander, and what may be his fate. I remember a stanza in an old Scottish ballad, which, notwithstanding its rude simplicity, speaks feelingly to the heart:

"Little did my mother think,
That day she cradled me,
What land I was to travel in,
Or what death I should die!"†

Old Scottish songs are, you know, a favourite study and pursuit of mine, and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you. The catastrophe of the piece is a poor ruined female, lamenting her fate. She concludes with this pathetic wish:

"O that my father had ne'er on me smil'd;
O that my mother had ne'er to me sung!
O that my cradle had never been rock'd!
But that I had died when I was young!

O that the grave it were my bed;
My blankets were my winding sheet;
The clocks and the worms my bedfellows a'!
And O sae sound as I should sleep!"

I do not remember, in all my reading, to have met with any thing more truly the language of misery than the exclamation in the last line. Misery is like love; to speak its language truly, the author must have felt it.

I am every day expecting the doctor to give your little godson‡ the small pox. They are *rife* in the country, and I tremble for his fate. By the way, I cannot help congratulating you on his looks and spirit. Every person who sees him acknowledges him to be the finest, handsomest child he has ever seen. I am myself delighted with the manly swell of his little chest, and a certain miniature dignity in the carriage of his head, and the glance of his fine black eye, which promise the undaunted gallantry of an independent mind.

I thought to have sent you some rhymes, but time forbids. I promise you poetry until you are tired of it, next time I have the honour of assuring you how truly I am, &c.

R. B.

No. CLXXVIII.

TO Mr. PETER HILL,

BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, 2nd Feb. 1790.

No! I will not say one word about apologies or excuses for not writing—I am a poor, ras-

* ["Falconer," says Currie, "was in early life a sailor-boy, on board a man of war, in which capacity he attracted the notice of Campbell, the author of the satire on Dr. Johnson, entitled 'Lexiphanes,' then purser of the ship. Campbell took him as a servant, and delighted in giving him instruction; and when Falconer afterwards acquired celebrity boasted of him as a scholar. The Editor had this information from a surgeon of a man of war, in 1777, who knew both Campbell and Falconer, and who himself perished soon after by shipwreck, on the coast of America."

Falconer's parentage was humble, but his education was above the common: he displayed his poetic talents at an early age in a poem published in 1751, in memory of Frederick Prince of Wales: the Shipwreck, by which his name will be known to posterity, appeared in 1762, and obtained for him the notice of the Duke of York. His marine Dictionary, printed in 1769, introduced his name to many on whom the pathos of his poetry was lost: nor should it be forgotten that, before he sailed on his last fatal expedition, he wrote a poem called the Demagogue, in which he satirised with skill, as well as bitterness, one of the profligate patriots of the day. Falconer was a native of one of the towns in the coast of Fife, and his parents, who had suffered some misfortunes, removed to one of the sea-ports of England, where they both died soon after of an epidemic fever, leaving poor Falconer, then a boy, forlorn and destitute; in consequence of which he entered on board a man of war. He died in 1770.]

† [This touching sentiment occurs in the Ballad of the "Queen's Marie," or as some sets have it, "Mary Hamilton." One stanza will indicate the ballad to which we allude; it is thus:—

Yestreen the Queen had four Maries,
This day she'll have but three;
There was Mary Seaton, and Mary Beaton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me.

(See Border Minstrelsy.)

Queen Mary had four attendants of her own Christian name. In the ballad quoted by Burns, one of these gentlewomen is described as murdering her illegitimate child, and suffering for the crime; and the verse quoted is one of her last expressions at the place of execution.]

‡ The bard's second son, Francis.

cally gauger, condemned to gallop at least 200 miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels, and where can I find time to write to, or importance to interest, any body? The upbraidings of my conscience, nay the upbraidings of my wife, have persecuted me on your account these two or three months past.—I wish to God I was a great man, that my correspondence might throw light upon you, to let the world see what you really are: and then I would make your fortune, without putting my hand in my pocket for you, which, like all other great men, I suppose I would avoid as much as possible. What are you doing, and how are you doing? Have you lately seen any of my few friends? What has become of the BOROUGH REFORM, or how is the fate of my poor name-sake Mademoiselle Burns decided? O man! but for thee and thy selfish appetites, and dishonest artifices, that beauteous form, and that once innocent and still ingenuous mind, might have shone conspicuous and lovely in the faithful wife, and the affectionate mother; and shall the unfortunate sacrifice to thy pleasures have no claim on thy humanity!*

I saw lately in a Review some extracts from a new poem, called the Village Curate; send it me. I want likewise a cheap copy of The World. Mr. Armstrong, the young poet, who does me the honour to mention me so kindly in his works, please give him my best thanks for the copy of his book—I shall write him, my first leisure hour. I like his poetry much, but I think his style in prose quite astonishing.

Your book came safe, and I am going to trouble you with farther commissions. I call it troubling you—because I want only BOOKS; the cheapest way, the best; so you may have to hunt for them in the evening auctions. I want Smollett's Works, for the sake of his incomparable humour. I have already Roderick Random, and Humphrey Clinker.—Peregrine Pickle, Launcelot Greaves, and Ferdinand, Count Fathom, I still want; but as I said, the veriest ordinary copies will serve me. I am nice only in the appearance of my poets. I forget the price of Cowper's Poems, but, I believe, I must have them. I saw the other day proposals for a publication, entitled, "Banks's new and complete Christian's Family Bible," printed for C. Cooke, Paternoster-row, London.—He promises at least to give in the work, I think it is three hundred and odd engravings, to which he has put the names of the first artists in London.—You will know the character of the performance, as some numbers of it are published; and, if it is really what it pretends to be, set me down as a subscriber, and send me the published numbers.†

Let me hear from you, your first leisure minute, and trust me you shall in future have no reason to complain of my silence. The dazzling perplexity of novelty will dissipate, and leave me to pursue my course in the quiet path of methodical routine.

R. B.

No. CLXXIX.

TO Mr. W. NICOL.

Ellisland, Feb. 9th, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

THAT d-mned mare of yours is dead. I would freely have given her price to have saved her; she has vexed me beyond description. Indebted as I was to your goodness beyond what I can ever repay, I eagerly grasped at your offer to have the mare with me. That I might at least shew my readiness in wishing to be grateful, I took every care of her in my power. She was never crossed for riding above half a score of times by me, or in my keeping. I drew her in the plough, one of three, for one poor week. I refused fifty-five shillings for her, which was the highest bode I could squeeze for her. I fed her up and had her in fine order for Dumfries fair; when, four or five days before the fair, she was seized with an unaccountable disorder in the sinews, or somewhere in the bones of the neck; with a weakness or total want of power in her fillets, and in short the whole vertebræ of her spine seemed to be diseased and unhinged, and in eight-and-forty hours, in spite of the two best farriers in the country, she died and be d-mned to her! The farriers said that she had been quite strained in the fillets beyond cure before you had bought her; and that the poor devil, though she might keep a little flesh, had been jaded and quite worn out with fatigue and oppression. While she was with me, she was under my own eye, and I assure you, my much valued friend, every thing was done for her that could be

* [The frail female here alluded to had been the subject of some rather oppressive magisterial proceedings, which took their character from Creech, and roused some public feeling in her behalf.]

† [Perhaps no set of men more effectually avail themselves of the easy credulity of the public than a certain description of Paternoster-row booksellers. Three hundred and odd engravings!—and by the first artists in London, too!—no wonder that Burns was dazzled by the splendour of the promise. It is no unusual thing for this class of impostors to illustrate the Holy Scriptures by plates originally engraved for the History of England, and I have actually seen subjects designed by our celebrated artist Stothard, from Clarissa Harlowe and the Novelist's Magazine, converted, with incredible dexterity, by these Bookselling-Breslaws, into Scriptural embellishments! One of these venders of 'Family Bibles' lately called on me to consult me professionally about a folio engraving he brought with him.—It represented Mons. Buffon, seated, contemplating various groups of animals that surrounded him: he merely wished, he said, to be informed whether by unclothing the Naturalist, and giving him a rather more resolute look, the plate could not, at a trifling expense, be made to pass for "Daniel in the Lion's Den!"—CROMEK.]

done; and the accident has vexed me to the heart. In fact I could not pluck up spirits to write to you, on account of the unfortunate business.

There is little new in this country. Our theatrical company, of which you must have heard, leave us this week. Their merit and character are indeed very great, both on the stage and in private life; not a worthless creature among them; and their encouragement has been accordingly. Their usual run is from eighteen to twenty-five pounds a night: seldom less than the one, and the house will hold no more than the other. There have been repeated instances of sending away six, and eight, and ten pounds a night for want of room. A new theatre is to be built by subscription; the first stone is to be laid on Friday first to come. Three hundred guineas have been raised by thirty subscribers, and thirty more might have been got if wanted. The manager, Mr. Sutherland, was introduced to me by a friend from Ayr; and a worthier or cleverer fellow I have rarely met with. Some of our clergy have slipt in by stealth now and then; but they have got up a farce of their own. You must have heard how the Rev. Mr. Lawson of Kirkmahoe, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Kirkpatrick of Dunscore, and the rest of that faction, have accused, in formal process, the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron of Kirkgunzeon, that, in ordaining Mr. Nielson to the cure of souls in Kirkbean, he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Nielson to the confession of faith, *so far as it was agreeable to reason and the word of God!*

Mrs. B. begs to be remembered most gratefully to you. Little Bobby and Frank are charmingly well and healthy. I am jaded to death with fatigue. For these two or three months, on an average, I have not ridden less than two hundred miles per week. I have done little in the poetic way. I have given Mr. Sutherland two Prologues; one of which was delivered last week. I have likewise strung four or five barbarous stanzas, to the tune of Chevy Chase, by way of Elegy on your poor unfortunate mare, beginning (the name she got here was Peg Nicholson)

"Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
As ever trode on airn;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And past the mouth o'Cairn."

[See page 293.]

My best compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and little Neddy, and all the family; I hope Ned is a good scholar, and will come out to gather nuts and apples with me next harvest.*

R. B.

No. CLXXX.

TO Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, 13th February, 1790.

I BEG your pardon, my dear and much valued friend, for writing to you on this very unfashionable, unsightly sheet—

"My poverty, but not my will, consents."

But to make amends, since of modish post I have none, except one poor widowed half-sheet of gilt, which lies in my drawer among my plebeian fool's-cap pages, like the widow of a man of fashion, whom that unpolite scoundrel, Necessity, has driven from Burgundy and Pine-apple, to a dish of Bohea, with the scandal-bearing helpmate of a village priest; or a glass of whisky-toddy, with a ruby-nosed yoke-fellow of a foot-padding exciseman—I make a vow to enclose this sheet-full of epistolary fragments in that my only scrap of gilt paper.

I am indeed your unworthy debtor for three friendly letters. I ought to have written to you long ere now, but it is a literal fact I have scarcely a spare moment. It is not that I *will not* write to you; Miss Burnet is not more dear to her guardian angel, nor his grace the Duke of Queensberry to the powers of darkness, than my friend Cunningham to me. It is not that I *cannot* write to you; should you doubt it, take the following fragment, which was intended for you some time ago, and be convinced that I can *antithesize* sentiment, and *circumvolute* periods, as well as any coiner of phrase in the regions of philology.

December, 1789.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

WHERE are you? And what are you doing? Can you be that son of levity, who takes up a friendship as he takes up a fashion; or are you, like some other of the worthiest fellows in the world, the victim of indolence, laden with fetters of ever-increasing weight?

What strange beings we are! Since we have a portion of conscious existence, equally capable of enjoying pleasure, happiness, and rapture, or of suffering pain, wretchedness, and misery, it is surely worthy of an inquiry, whether there be not such a thing as a science of

* [The nuts, which the poet promised the son of his friend, might be gathered on every burn-bank in the vale of Nith; not so the apples; a few might be seen in private gardens, and gentlemen's orchards, but they were not to be found giving beauty to the hedge-rows, and fragrance to the public road, as in the sunnier regions of the south. The ancient golden pippin, and the true honey-pear, were plentiful in the old orchard of the house of Comyn, at Dalswinton, but the garden of Ellisland, during the superintendence of the poet, produced only green kale and gooseberries—it is otherwise now.—CUNNINGHAM.]

life; whether method, economy, and fertility of expedients, be not applicable to enjoyment; and whether there be not a want of dexterity in pleasure, which renders our little scantling of happiness still less; and a profuseness, an intoxication in bliss, which leads to satiety, disgust, and self-abhorrence. There is not a doubt but that health, talents, character, decent competency, respectable friends, are real substantial blessings; and yet do we not daily see those who enjoy many or all of these good things contrive notwithstanding to be as unhappy as others to whose lot few of them have fallen? I believe one great source of this mistake or misconduct is owing to a certain stimulus, with us called ambition, which goads us up the hill of life, not as we ascend other eminences, for the laudable curiosity of viewing an extended landscape, but rather for the dishonest pride of looking down on others of our fellow creatures, seemingly diminutive in humbler stations, &c.

Sunday, 14th February, 1790.

God help me! I am now obliged to join

"Night to day, and Sunday to the week."

If there be any truth in the orthodox faith of these churches, I am d-mned past redemption, and what is worse, d-mned to all eternity. I am deeply read in Boston's Four-fold State, Marshal on Sanctification, Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest, &c.; but "there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there," for me; so I shall e'en turn Arminian, and trust to "Sincere though imperfect obedience."

Tuesday, 16th.

Luckily for me, I was prevented from the discussion of the knotty point at which I had just made a full stop. All my fears and cares are of this world: if there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a Deist; but I fear, every fair, unprejudiced inquirer must in some degree be a Sceptic. It is not that there are any very staggering arguments against the immortality of man; but, like electricity, phlogiston, &c., the subject is so involved in darkness that we want data to go upon. One thing frightens me much; that we are to live for ever, seems *too good news to be true*. That we are to enter into a new scene of existence, where, exempt from want and pain, we shall enjoy ourselves and our friends without satiety or separation—how much should I be indebted to any one who could fully assure me that this was certain!

My time is once more expired. I will write to Mr. Cleghorn soon. God bless him and all his concerns! And may all the powers that preside over conviviality and friendship be present with all their kindest influence, when the bearer of this, Mr. Syme, and you meet! I wish I could also make one.

Finally, brethren, farewell! Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gentle, whatsoever things are charitable, whatsoever things are kind, think on these things, and think on

R. B.*

No. CLXXXI.

TO Mr. HILL.

Ellisland, 2nd March, 1790.

At a late meeting of the Monkland Friendly Society, it was resolved to augment their library by the following books, which you are to send us as soon as possible: — The Mirror, The Lounger, Man of Feeling, Man of the World, (these, for my own sake, I wish to have by the

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* [The following letters from the pen of Alexander Cunningham will be read with interest:—

Edinburgh, May 25th, 1789.

"My dear Burns,

I am much indebted to you for your last friendly elegant epistle, and it shall make a part of the vanity of *my composition* to retain your correspondence through life. It was remarkable your introducing the name of Miss Burnet at a time when she was in such ill health; and I am sure it will grieve your gentle heart to hear of her being in the last stage of consumption. Alas! that so much beauty, innocence, and virtue, should be nipt in the bud! Hers was the smile of cheerfulness—of sensibility, not of allurement; and her elegance of manners corresponded with the purity and elevation of her mind.

How does your friendly muse? I am sure she still retains her affection for you, and that you have many of her favours in your possession, which I have not seen. I weary much to hear from you. * * * * I beseech you do not forget me. * * * * I most sincerely hope all your concerns in life prosper, and that your roof-tree enjoys the blessing of good health. All your friends here are well, among whom, and *not the least*, is your acquaintance Cleghorn. As for myself, I am well, as far as * * * * will let a man be; but with these I am happy. When you meet with my very agreeable friend, J. Syme, give him for me a hearty squeeze, and bid God bless him.

Is there any probability of your being soon in Edinburgh?"

January 28th, 1790.

"In some instances it is reckoned unpardonable to quote any one's own words, but the value I have for your friendship nothing can more truly or more elegantly express than

'Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.'

"Having written to you twice without having heard from you, I am apt to think my letters have miscarried. My conjecture is only framed upon the chapter of accidents turning up against me, as it too often does, in the trivial, and I may with truth add, the more important affairs of life; but I shall continue occasionally to inform you what is going on among the circle of your friends in these parts. In these days of merriment, I have frequently heard your name *proclaimed* at the jovial board—under the roof of our hospitable friend at Stenhouse-mills, there were no

'Lingering moments number'd with care.'

"I saw your Address to the New-year, in the Dumfries Journal. Of your productions I shall say nothing, but my acquaintances allege that when your name is mentioned, which every man of celebrity must know often happens, I am the champion, the Mendoza, against all snarling critics, and narrow-minded reptiles, of whom *a few* on this planet do *crawl*.

"With best compliments to your wife, and her black-eyed sister, I remain, yours, &c."]

first carrier), Knox's History of the Reformation; Rae's History of the Rebellion in 1715; any good History of the Rebellion in 1745; A Display of the Secession Act and Testimony, by Mr. Gibb; Hervey's Meditations; Beveridge's Thoughts; and another copy of Watson's Body of Divinity.

I wrote to Mr. A. Masterton three or four months ago, to pay some money he owed me into your hands, and lately I wrote to you to the same purpose, but I have heard from neither one nor other of you.

In addition to the books I commissioned in my last, I want very much an Index to the Excise Laws, or an Abridgment of all the Statutes now in force, relative to the Excise, by Jellinger Symons; I want three copies of this book: if it is now to be had, cheap or dear, get it for me. An honest country neighbour of mine wants, too, a Family Bible, the larger the better, but second-handed, for he does not choose to give above ten shillings for the book. I want likewise for myself, as you can pick them up, second-handed or cheap, copies of Otway's Dramatic Works, Ben Jonson's, Dryden's, Congreve's, Wycherley's, Vanbrugh's, Cibber's, or any Dramatic Works of the more modern, Macklin, Garrick, Foote, Colman, or Sheridan. A good copy, too, of Molière, in French, I much want. Any other good dramatic authors in that language I want also; but comic authors chiefly, though I should wish to have Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire too. I am in no hurry for all, or any of these, but if you accidentally meet with them very cheap, get them for me.*

And now, to quit the dry walk of business, how do you do, my dear friend? and how is Mrs. Hill? I trust, if now and then not so *elegantly* handsome, at least as amiable, and sings as divinely as ever. My good wife too has a charming "wood-note wild;" now could we four ———

I am out of all patience with this vile world, for one thing. Mankind are by nature benevolent creatures, except in a few scoundrelly instances. I do not think that avarice of the good things we chance to have is born with us; but we are placed here amid so much nakedness, and hunger, and poverty, and want, that we are under a cursed necessity of studying selfishness, in order that we may EXIST! Still there are, in every age, a few souls that all the wants and woes of life cannot debase to selfishness, or even to the necessary alloy of caution and prudence. If ever I am in danger of vanity, it is when I contemplate myself on this side of my disposition and character. God knows I am no saint; I have a whole host of follies and sins to answer for; but if I could, and I believe I do it as far as I can, I would wipe away all tears from all eyes. Adieu!

R. B.

* [That Burns at this period had turned his thoughts on the drama, his order to his bookseller for dramatic works, and his letters to Lady Harriet Don, plainly enough intimate. "No man knows," he thus writes, "what nature has fitted him for till he try: and if, after a preparatory course of some years' study of men and books, I should find myself unequal to the task, there is no great harm done. Virtue and study are their own reward. I have got Shakspeare, and begun with him; and I shall stretch a point, and make myself master of all the dramatic authors of any repute in both English and French — the only languages which I know."]

No. CLXXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 10th April, 1790.

I HAVE just now, my ever honoured friend, enjoyed a very high luxury, in reading a paper of the Lounger. You know my national prejudices. I had often read and admired the *Spectator*, *Adventurer*, *Rambler*, and *World*; but still with a certain regret that they were so thoroughly and entirely English. Alas! have I often said to myself, what are all the boasted advantages which my country reaps from the union, that can counterbalance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name! I often repeat that couplet of my favourite poet, Goldsmith—

> "——— States, of native liberty possest,
> Tho' very poor, may yet be very blest."

Nothing can reconcile me to the common terms, "English Ambassador, English Court," &c. And I am out of all patience to see that equivocal character, Hastings, impeached by "the Commons of England." Tell me, my friend, is this weak prejudice? I believe in my conscience such ideas as "my country; her independence; her honour; the illustrious names that mark the history of my native land;" &c. —I believe these, among your *men of the world*, men who in fact guide for the most part and govern our world, are looked on as so many modifications of wrong-headedness. They know the use of bawling out such terms, to rouse or lead THE RABBLE; but for their own private use, with almost all the *able statesmen* that ever existed, or now exist, when they talk of right and wrong, they only mean proper and improper; and their measure of conduct is, not what they OUGHT, but what they DARE. For the truth of this I shall not ransack the history of nations, but appeal to one of the ablest judges of men that ever lived—the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield. In fact, a man who could thoroughly control his vices whenever they interfered with his interests, and who could completely put on the appearance of every virtue as often as it suited his purposes, is, on the

Stanhopian plan, the *perfect man*; a man to lead nations. But are great abilities, complete without a flaw, and polished without a blemish, the standard of human excellence? This is certainly the staunch opinion of *men of the world;* but I call on honour, virtue, and worth, to give the Stygian doctrine a loud negative! However, this must be allowed, that, if you abstract from man the idea of an existence beyond the grave, *then*, the true measure of human conduct is, *proper* and *improper:* virtue and vice, as dispositions of the heart, are, in that case, of scarcely the same import and value to the world at large as harmony and discord in the modifications of sound; and a delicate sense of honour, like a nice ear for music, though it may sometimes give the possessor an ecstacy unknown to the coarser organs of the herd, yet, considering the harsh gratings, and inharmonic jars, in this ill-tuned state of being, it is odds but the individual would be as happy, and certainly would be as much respected by the true judges of society as it would then stand, without either a good ear or a good heart.

You must know I have just met with the *Mirror* and *Lounger* for the first time, and I am quite in raptures with them; I should be glad to have your opinion of some of the papers. The one I have just read, *Lounger*, No. 61, has cost me more honest tears than any thing I have read of a long time.* Mackenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots, and, in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour, he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic. His *Man of Feeling* (but I am not counsel learned in the laws of criticism) I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what book, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence; in short, more of all that ennobles the soul to herself, or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley? †

Still, with all my admiration of Mackenzie's writings, I do not know if they are the fittest reading for a young man who is about to set out, as the phrase is, to make his way into life. Do not you think, Madam, that among the few favoured of Heaven in the structure of their minds (for such there certainly are), there may be a purity, a tenderness, a dignity, and elegance of soul which are of no use, nay, in some degree, absolutely disqualifying for the truly important business of making a man's way into life? If I am not much mistaken, my gallant young friend, A * * * * * *, ‡ is very much under these disqualifications; and for the young females of a family I could mention, well may they excite parental solicitude, for I, a common acquaintance, or as my vanity will have it, an humble friend, have often trembled for a turn of mind which may render them eminently happy—or peculiarly miserable!

I have been manufacturing some verses lately; but as I have got the most hurried season of excise business over, I hope to have more leisure to transcribe any thing that may show how much I have the honour to be, Madam,

Yours, &c.

R. B.

No. CLXXXIII.

TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL.§

Ellisland, 1790.

SIR:

I SHALL not fail to wait on Captain Riddel to-night—I wish and pray that the goddess of justice herself would appear to-morrow among our hon. gentlemen, merely to give them a word in their ear that mercy to the thief is injustice to the honest man. For my part I have galloped over my ten parishes these four days, until this moment that I am just alighted, or rather, that my poor jackass-skeleton of a horse has let me down; for the miserable devil has been on his knees half a score of times within the last twenty miles, telling me in his own way,

* [This paper relates to attachments between servants and masters, and concludes with the story of Albert Blane.]

† [Of all the letters which Burns wrote to Henry Mackenzie, not one has been handed down to us; the following is from the pen of the Man of Feeling, and was addressed to the poet when about to set off on his Border tour:—

"DEAR SIR,

"AMIDST a variety of occupations in which I am at this moment engaged, I have only time to scrawl these few lines to return you very sincere and cordial thanks for the engraving and the letter accompanying it. The anecdote you obligingly communicate is not less gratifying to the feelings of the man than flattering to the vanity of the author.

"I heartily wish you a pleasant journey and all happiness and success in the cause and in the objects of it. I hope, as soon as you return to Edinburgh, to have the pleasure of seeing you. Mr. Stewart told me he had given you a letter to Mr. Brydone, otherwise I would have written a few lines to him by you, as he expressed to me a very strong desire to see you at his house on the banks of the Tweed. Once more I wish you every thing pleasant and prosperous.

"Yours very faithfully,

"HENRY MACKENZIE."

It is singular that the poet read the Mirror and Lounger for the first time in 1790—in the year 1786 there appeared in the latter a generous article from the pen of Mackenzie on the poems of Burns, in which he was placed nigh the summit of the Scottish Parnassus.]

‡ [Probably Anthony, a son of Mrs. Dunlop, is here alluded to.]

§ [Collector Mitchell was a kind and considerate gentleman, and befriended the poet on several occasions; to his grandson, Mr. John Campbell, surgeon, in Aberdeen, we are indebted for this characteristic letter.]

'Behold, am not I thy faithful jade of a horse, on which thou hast ridden these many years?'

In short, Sir, I have broke my horse's wind, and almost broke my own neck, besides some injuries in a part that shall be nameless, owing to a hard-hearted stone for a saddle. I find that every offender has so many great men to espouse his cause that I shall not be surprised if I am committed to the strong hold of the law to-morrow for insolence to the dear friends of the gentlemen of the country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient humble

R. B.

No. CLXXXIV.

TO Dr. MOORE.

Excise-Office, Dumfries, 14th July, 1790.

Sir:

Coming into town this morning, to attend my duty in this office, it being collection-day, I met with a gentleman who tells me he is on his way to London; so I take the opportunity of writing to you, as franking is at present under a temporary death. I shall have some snatches of leisure through the day, amid our horrid business and bustle, and I shall improve them as well as I can; but let my letter be as stupid as * * * * * * *, as miscellaneous as a newspaper, as short as a hungry grace-before-meat, or as long as a law-paper in the Douglas cause; as ill spelt as country John's billet-doux, or as unsightly a scrawl as Betty Byre-Mucker's answer to it; I hope, considering circumstances, you will forgive it; and as it will put you to no expense of postage, I shall have the less reflection about it.

I am sadly ungrateful in not returning you my thanks for your most valuable present, *Zeluco*. In fact, you are in some degree blameable for my neglect. You were pleased to express a wish for my opinion of the work, which so flattered me that nothing less would serve my over-weening fancy than a formal criticism on the book. In fact, I have gravely planned a comparative view of you, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, in your different qualities and merits as novel-writers. This, I own, betrays my ridiculous vanity, and I may probably never bring the business to bear; but I am fond of the spirit young Elihu shews in the book of Job—"And I said, I will also declare my opinion." I have quite disfigured my copy of the book with my annotations. I never take it up without at the same time taking my pencil, and marking with asterisms, parentheses, &c., wherever I meet with an original thought, a nervous remark on life and manners, a remarkable well-turned period, or a character sketched with uncommon precision.

Though I should hardly think of fairly writing out my "Comparative View," I shall certainly trouble you with my remarks, such as they are.

I have just received from my gentleman that horrid summons in the book of revelations—"That time shall be no more!"

The little collection of sonnets have some charming poetry in them. If *indeed* I am indebted to the fair author for the book, and not, as I rather suspect, to a celebrated author of the other sex, I should certainly have written to the lady, with my grateful acknowledgments, and my own ideas of the comparative excellence of her pieces. I would do this last, not from any vanity of thinking that my remarks could be of much consequence to Mrs. Smith, but merely from my own feelings as an author, doing as I would be done by.*

R. B.

No. CLXXXV.

TO Mr. MURDOCH,

TEACHER OF FRENCH, LONDON.

Ellisland, July 16, 1790.

My dear Sir,

I received a letter from you a long time ago, but unfortunately as it was in the time of my peregrinations and journeyings through Scotland, I mislaid or lost it, and by consequence your direction along with it. Luckily my good star brought me acquainted with Mr. Kennedy, who, I understand, is an acquaintance of yours: and by his means and mediation I hope to replace that link which my unfortunate negligence had so unluckily broken in the chain of our correspondence. I was the more vexed at the vile accident as my brother William, a journeyman saddler, has been for some time in London; and wished above all things for your direction, that he might have paid his respects to his Father's Friend.

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* [The sonnets to which Burns alludes were those of Charlotte Smith; in the volume which belonged to the poet one note alone intimates that the book passed through his hands; the fair authoress, in giving the source of line 14, in the 8th sonnet—

"Have power to cure all sadness but despair,"

quotes Milton—

"Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair."

To this Burns added with the pen

"He sang sae sweet as might dispel
A' rage but fell despair."

These lines are to be found in one version at least of the fine ballad of Gil Morice.]

His last address he sent me was, "Wm. Burns, at Mr. Barber's, saddler, No. 181, Strand." I wrote him by Mr. Kennedy, but neglected to ask him for your address; so, if you find a spare half minute, please let my brother know by a card where and when he will find you, and the poor fellow will joyfully wait on you, as one of the few surviving friends of the man whose name, and Christian name too, he has the honour to bear.

The next letter I write you shall be a long one. I have much to tell you of "hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly breach," with all the eventful history of a life, the early years of which owed so much to your kind tutorage; but this at an hour of leisure. My kindest compliments to Mrs. Murdoch and family.

I am ever, my dear Sir,
Your obliged friend,
R. B.*

No. CLXXXVI.

TO Mr. M'MURDO.

Ellisland, 2nd August, 1790.

Sir,

Now that you are over with the sirens of Flattery, the harpies of Corruption, and the furies of Ambition, these infernal deities, that on all sides, and in all parties, preside over the villainous business of Politics, permit a rustic muse of your acquaintance to do her best to soothe you with a song.—

You knew Henderson—I have not flattered his memory.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

R. B.†

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* [The reply to this letter was as follows:—

From Mr. Murdoch to the Bard.

Hart-street, Bloomsbury Square, London, September 14th, 1790.

"My dear Friend,

"Yours of the 16th of July, I received on the 26th, in the afternoon, per favour of my friend Mr. Kennedy, and at the same time was informed that your brother was ill. Being engaged in business till late that evening, I set out next morning to see him, and had thought of three or four medical gentlemen of my acquaintance, to one or other of whom I might apply for advice, provided it should be necessary. But when I went to Mr. Barber's, to my great astonishment and heart-felt grief I found that my young friend had, on Saturday, bid an everlasting farewell to all sublunary things.—It was about a fortnight before that he had found me out, by Mr. Stevenson's accidentally calling at my shop to buy something. We had only one interview, and that was highly entertaining to me in several respects. He mentioned some instruction I had given him when very young, to which he said he owed, in a great measure, the philanthropy he possessed. He also took notice of my exhorting you all, when I wrote, about eight years ago, to the man who, of all mankind that I ever knew, stood highest in my esteem, "not to let go your integrity." You may easily conceive that such conversation was both pleasing and encouraging to me: I anticipated a deal of rational happiness from future conversations. Vain are our expectations and hopes. They are so almost always—perhaps (nay, certainly), for our good. Were it not for disappointed hopes, we could hardly spend a thought on another state of existence, or be in any degree reconciled to the quitting of this. I know of no one source of consolation to those who have lost young relatives equal to that of their being of a good disposition, and of a promising character.

* * * * *

Be assured, my dear friend, that I cordially sympathize with you all, and particularly with Mrs. W. Burness, who is undoubtedly one of the most tender and affectionate mothers that ever lived. Remember me to her in the most friendly manner, when you see her, or write. Please present my best compliments to Mrs. R. Burns, and to your brother and sisters. There is no occasion for me to exhort you to filial duty; and to use your united endeavours in rendering the evening of life as comfortable as possible to a mother who has dedicated so great a part of it in promoting your temporal and spiritual welfare.

Your letter to Dr. Moore I delivered at his house, and shall most likely know your opinion of Zeluco, the first time I meet with him. I wish and hope for a long letter. Be particular about your mother's health. I hope she is too much a christian to be afflicted above measure, or to sorrow as those who have no hope.

One of the most pleasing hopes I have is to visit you all; but I am commonly disappointed in what I most ardently wish for.

I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

John Murdoch."

The promised account of himself was never written: but this is the less to be regretted since we have that which he rendered of his earlier days to Dr. Moore—a valuable memoir, from which all biographers have borrowed. This letter was communicated to Cromek by Mr. Murdoch, accompanied by the following interesting note:—

London, Hart-street, Bloomsbury, Dec. 28th, 1807.

"Dear Sir,

"The enclosed letter, which I lately found among my papers, I copy for your perusal, partly because it is Burns's, partly because it makes honourable mention of my rational christian friend, his father; and likewise because it is rather flattering to myself. I glory in no one thing so much as an intimacy with good men—the friendship of others reflect no honour, when I recollect the pleasure (and I hope benefit) I received from the conversation of William Burness, especially when on the Lord's Day we walked together for about two miles to the house of prayer, there publicly to adore and praise the Giver of all good. I entertain an ardent hope that together we shall renew the glorious theme in distant worlds, with powers more adequate to the mighty subject, the exuberant beneficence of the Great Creator.

But to the letter:—

I promised myself a deal of happiness in the conversation of my dear young friend; but my promises of this nature generally prove fallacious. Two visits were the utmost that I received. At one of them, however, he repeated a lesson which I had given him about twenty years before, when he was a mere child, concerning the pity and tenderness due to animals. To that lesson (which it seems was brought to the level of his capacity) he declared himself indebted for almost all the philanthropy he possessed.

Let not parents and teachers imagine that it is needless to talk seriously to children. They are sooner fit to be reasoned with than is generally thought. Strong and indelible impressions are to be made before the mind be agitated and ruffled by the numerous train of distracting cares and unruly passions, whereby it is frequently rendered almost unsusceptible of the principles and precepts of rational religion and sound morality.

But I find myself digressing again. Poor William! then in the bloom and vigour of youth, caught a putrid fever, and, in a few days, as real chief mourner, I followed his remains to the land of forgetfulness.

John Murdoch."]

† [This brief letter enclosed the admirable poem on the death of Captain Matthew Henderson, and no one could

No. CLXXXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

8th August, 1790.

DEAR MADAM,

AFTER a long day's toil, plague, and care, I sit down to write to you. Ask me not why I have delayed it so long! It was owing to hurry, indolence, and fifty other things; in short to any thing—but forgetfulness of *la plus aimable de son sexe*. By the bye, you are indebted your best courtesy to me for this last compliment; as I pay it from my sincere conviction of its truth—a quality rather rare in compliments of these grinning, bowing, scraping times.

Well, I hope writing to *you* will ease a little my troubled soul. Sorely has it been bruised to-day! A *ci-devant* friend of mine, and an intimate acquaintance of yours, has given my feelings a wound that I perceive will gangrene dangerously ere it cure. He has wounded my pride!* R. B.

No. CLXXXVIII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, 8th August, 1790.

FORGIVE me, my once dear, and ever dear, friend, my seeming negligence. You cannot sit down and fancy the busy life I lead.

I laid down my goose feather to beat my brains for an apt simile, and had some thoughts of a country grannum at a family christening; a bride on the market-day before her marriage;

* * * *
* * * *

or a tavern-keeper at an election-dinner; but the resemblance that hits my fancy best is that blackguard miscreant, Satan, who roams about like a roaring lion, seeking, *searching* whom he may devour. However, tossed about as I am, if I choose (and who would not choose) to bind down with the crampets of attention the brazen foundation of integrity, I may rear up the superstructure of Independence, and, from its daring turrets, bid defiance to the storms of fate. And is not this a "consummation devoutly to be wished?"

"Thy spirit, Independence, let me share:
Lord of the lion-heart, and eagle-eye!
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky!"

Are not these noble verses? They are the introduction of Smollet's Ode to Independence: if you have not seen the poem, I will send it to you.—How wretched is the man that hangs on by the favours of the great! To shrink from every dignity of man, at the approach of a lordly piece of self-consequence, who amid all his tinsel glitter, and stately hauteur, is but a creature formed as thou art—and perhaps not so well formed as thou art—came into the world a puling infant as thou didst, and must go out of it as all men must, a naked corse.

R. B.

No. CLXXXIX.

TO DR. ANDERSON.*

[1790.]

SIR:

I AM much indebted to my worthy friend Dr. Blacklock for introducing me to a gentleman of Dr. Anderson's celebrity; but when you do me the honour to ask my assistance in your proposed publication, alas, Sir! you might as well think to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva band. I am a miserable hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of holding the noses of the poor publicans to the grindstone of the Excise! and like Milton's Satan, for private reasons, am forced

"To do what yet, tho' damn'd, I would abhor."

—and except a couplet or two of honest execration

* * * * * * R. B.

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better feel than the gentleman to whom it was addressed the difference between the dissonance of politics, and the harmony of the muse. Who Henderson was has been a source of some solicitude; Mrs. Burns had only heard of his name, and Mrs. M'Murdo remembered him as an agreeable and witty man, but knew nothing of his lineage. Sir Thomas Wallace was applied to, and his communication afforded a little more light. He was intimate, he said, with Henderson, and much attached to him, as all who knew him were. During the stay of Burns in Edinburgh the Captain lived in the High Street, dined regularly at Fortune's Tavern, and was a member of the Capillaire Club, which was composed of all who inclined to the witty and the joyous. "With his family," says Sir Thomas, "I was not acquainted: but he was a gentleman of true principles and probity, and for abilities, goodness of heart, gentleness of nature, sprightly wit, and sparkling humour would have been an honour to any family in the land."]

* [Who this *ci-devant* friend was, and what was the nature of the quarrel between him and the poet, remain in obscurity.

"The preceding letter to Mrs. Dunlop explains the feelings under which this was written. The strain of indignant invective goes on some time longer in the style which our bard was too apt to indulge, and of which the reader has already seen so much."—CURRIE.]

* [Dr. Robert Anderson was one of the kindest and most benevolent authors of his time: his door was never shut against the deserving, and he held out his hand to almost all young literary aspirants. He was one of the first to discover the genius of Campbell, and the poet acknowledged his discernment in a dedication. He has been for some time numbered with the dead.—CUNNINGHAM.

This fragment, first published by Cromek, is placed by him and subsequent editors under 1794, and by Mr. Cunningham is supposed to be addressed to Dr. Robert Anderson, the editor of the British Poets. We have little doubt that the gentleman addressed was Dr. James Anderson, a well-known agricultural and miscellaneous writer, and the editor of a weekly miscellany entitled "The Bee." This publication was commenced in Edinburgh, December, 1790, and concluded in January 1794, when it formed eighteen

No. CXC.

TO CRAWFORD TAIT, Esq.

EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, 15th October, 1790.

Dear Sir:

Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance the bearer, Mr. Wm. Duncan, a friend of mine, whom I have long known and long loved. His father, whose only son he is, has a decent little property in Ayr-shire, and has bred the young man to the law, in which department he comes up an adventurer to your good town. I shall give you my friend's character in two words: as to his head, he has talents enough, and more than enough, for common life; as to his heart, when nature had kneaded the kindly clay that composes it, she said, "I can no more."

You, my good Sir, were born under kinder stars; but your fraternal sympathy, I well know, can enter into the feelings of the young man, who goes into life with the laudable ambition to *do* something, and to *be* something among his fellow-creatures; but whom the consciousness of friendless obscurity presses to the earth, and wounds to the soul!

Even the fairest of his virtues are against him. That independent spirit, and that ingenuous modesty, qualities inseparable from a noble mind, are, with the million, circumstances not a little disqualifying. What pleasure is in the power of the fortunate and the happy, by their notice and patronage, to brighten the countenance and glad the heart of such depressed youth! I am not so angry with mankind for their deaf economy of the purse:—The goods of this world cannot be divided without being lessened—but why be a niggard of that which bestows bliss on a fellow-creature, yet takes nothing from our own means of enjoyment? We wrap ourselves up in the cloak of our own better fortune, and turn away our eyes, lest the wants and woes of our brother-mortals should disturb the selfish apathy of our souls!

I am the worst hand in the world at asking a favour. That indirect address, that insinuating implication, which, without any positive request, plainly expresses your wish, is a talent not to be acquired at a plough-tail. Tell me then, for you can, in what periphrasis of language, in what circumvolution of phrase, I shall envelope, yet not conceal, this plain story, —"My dear Mr. Tait, my friend Mr. Duncan, whom I have the pleasure of introducing to you, is a young lad of your own profession, and a gentleman of much modesty, and great worth. Perhaps it may be in your power to assist him in the, to him, important consideration of getting a place; but, at all events, your notice and acquaintance will be a very great acquisition to him; and I dare pledge myself that he will never disgrace your favour."

You may possibly be surprised, Sir, at such a letter from me; 'tis, I own, in the usual way of calculating these matters, more than our acquaintance entitles me to; but my answer is short: Of all the men at your time of life, whom I knew in Edinburgh, you are the most accessible on the side on which I have assailed you. You are very much altered indeed from what you were when I knew you, if generosity point the path you will not tread, or humanity call to you in vain.

As to myself, a being to whose interest I believe you are still a well-wisher, I am here, breathing at all times, thinking sometimes, and rhyming now and then. Every situation has its share of the cares and pains of life, and my situation, I am persuaded, has a full ordinary allowance of its pleasures and enjoyments.

My best compliments to your father and Miss Tait. If you have an opportunity, please remember me in the solemn-league-and-covenant of friendship to Mrs. Lewis Hay.* I am a wretch for not writing her; but I am so hack-

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volumes. The above letter by Burns, from the allusion it makes to his extreme occupation by business, as well as from the bitterness of its tone, seems to have been written in the latter part of 1790, immediately after the poet had commenced exciseman; it was an answer, probably, to an application for aid in the conduct of "The Bee," then about to be started. For these reasons, the present editor has shifted its place in the poet's correspondence.—Chambers.

That this is evident will appear by the following Poetical Epistle of Dr. Blacklock to the Poet:—

Edinburgh, September 1st, 1790.

"How does my dear friend, much I languish to hear,
His fortune, re'ations, and all that are dear?
With love of the Muses so strongly still smitten,
I m:ant this epistle in verse to have written;
But from age and infirmity, indolence flows,
And this, much I fear, will restore me to prose.
Anon to my business I wish to proceed,—
Dr. Anderson guides and provokes me to speed,
A man of integrity, genius, and worth,
Who soon a performance intends to set forth;
A work miscellaneous, extensive, and free,
Which will weekly appear, by the name of the *Bee*,
Of this from himself I inclose you a plan,
And hope you will give what assistance you can.
Entangled with business, and haunted with care,
In which more or less human nature must share,
Some moments of leisure the Muses will claim,
A sacrifice due to amusement and fame,
The Bee, which sucks honey from ev'ry gay bloom,
With some rays of your genius her work may allume,
Whilst the flow'r whence her honey spontaneously flows,
As fragrantly smells, and as vig'rously grows.

Now with kind gratulations 'tis time to conclude,
And add, your promotion is here understood;
Thus free from the servile employ of excise, Sir,
We hope, soon to hear you commence supervisor;
You then, more at leisure, and free from controul,
May indulge the strong passion that reigns in your soul:
But I, feeble I, must to nature give way;
Devoted cold death's, and longevity's prey.
From verses though languid my thoughts must unbend,
Tho' still I remain your affectionate friend,

Thos. Blacklock."]

* [Formerly Miss Margaret Chalmers.]

neyed with self-accusation in that way that my conscience lies in my bosom with scarce the sensibility of an oyster in its shell. Where is Lady M'Kenzie? wherever she is, God bless her! I likewise beg leave to trouble you with compliments to Mr. Wm. Hamilton; Mrs. Hamilton and family; and Mrs. Chalmers, when you are in that country. Should you meet with Miss Nimmo, please remember me kindly to her.

R. B.

No. CXCI.

TO ———

Ellisland, 1790.

DEAR SIR:

WHETHER, in the way of my trade, I can be of any service to the Rev. Doctor, is I fear very doubtful. Ajax's shield consisted, I think, of seven bull hides and a plate of brass, which altogether set Hector's utmost force at defiance. Alas! I am not a Hector, and the worthy Doctor's foes are as securely armed as Ajax was. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, stupidity, malevolence, self-conceit, envy—all strongly bound in a massy frame of brazen impudence! Good God, Sir! to such a shield, humour is the peck of a sparrow, and satire the pop-gun of a school-boy. Creation-disgracing scelerats such as they, God only can mend, and the devil only can punish. In the comprehending way of Caligula, I wish they all had but one neck. I feel impotent as a child to the ardour of my wishes! O for a withering curse to blast the germins of their wicked machinations! O for a poisonous tornado, winged from the torrid zone of Tartarus, to sweep the spreading crop of their villainous contrivances to the lowest hell!*

R. B.

No. CXCII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, November, 1790.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Fate has long owed me a letter of good news from you, in return for the many tidings of sorrow which I have received. In this instance I most cordially obey the apostle—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice"—for me, *to sing* for joy, is no new thing; but *to preach* for joy, as I have done in the commencement of this epistle, is a pitch of extravagant rapture to which I never rose before.

I read your letter—I literally jumped for joy—How could such a mercurial creature as a poet lumpishly keep his seat, on the receipt of the best news from his best friend? I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod, an instrument indispensably necessary in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride—quick and quicker—out skipt I among the broomy banks of Nith to muse over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible. Mrs. Little's is a more elegant, but not a more sincere, compliment to the sweet little fellow than I, extempore almost, poured out to him in the following verses.

"Sweet flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move
Sae helpless, sweet, an fair!"

(Vide p. 249.)

I am much flattered by your approbation of my *Tam o' Shanter*, which you express in your former letter; though, by the bye, you load me in that said letter with accusations heavy and many; to all which I plead, *not guilty!* Your book is, I hear, on the road to reach me. As to printing of poetry, when you prepare it for the press, you have only to spell it right, and place the capital letters properly: as to the punctuation, the printers do that themselves.

I have a copy of *Tam o' Shanter* ready to send you by the first opportunity: it is too heavy to send by post.

I heard of Mr. Corbet† lately. He, in consequence of your recommendation, is most zealous to serve me. Please favour me soon with an account of your good folks; if Mrs. H. is recovering, and the young gentleman doing well.

R. B.

No. CXCIII.

TO LADY W. M. CONSTABLE.

Ellisland, 11th January, 1791.

MY LADY,

NOTHING less than the unlucky accident of having lately broken my right arm could have prevented me, the moment I received your ladyship's elegant present by Mrs. Miller, from returning you my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments; I assure your ladyship, I shall set it apart: the symbols of religion shall only be more sacred. In the moment of poetic composition, the box shall be my inspiring

* [This letter I suspect was addressed to Gavin Hamilton: it enclosed the Kirk's Alarm, written to aid the cause of Dr. M'Gill. Both the preacher and the poet failed: M'Gill recanted his heresy, and Burns had the mortification of hurting the feelings of many, without benefiting one.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [One of the general supervisors of Excise.]

genius. When I would breath the comprehensive wish of benevolence for the happiness of others, I shall recollect your ladyship; when I would interest my fancy in the distresses incident to humanity, I shall remember the unfortunate Mary.*

R. B.

No. CXCIV.

TO WILLIAM DUNBAR, W. S.†

Ellisland, 17th January, 1791.

I AM not gone to Elysium, most noble colonel,‡ but am still here in this sublunary world, serving my God by propagating his image, and honouring my king by begetting him loyal subjects.

Many happy returns of the season await my friend. May the thorns of care never beset his path! May peace be an inmate to his bosom, and rapture a frequent visitor of his soul! May the blood-hounds of misfortune never track his steps, nor the screech-owl of sorrow alarm his dwelling! May enjoyment tell thy hours, and pleasure number thy days, thou friend of the bard! "Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee!!!"

As a further proof that I am still in the land of existence, I send you a poem, the latest I have composed. I have a particular reason for wishing you only to show it to select friends, should you think it worthy a friend's perusal; but if, at your first leisure hour, you will favour me with your opinion of, and strictures on, the performance, it will be an additional obligation on, dear Sir, your deeply indebted humble servant,

R. B.

No. CXCV.

TO MRS. GRAHAM,

OF FINTRAY.

Ellisland, January, 1791.

MADAM,

WHETHER it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have, in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you. It is true, the purity of my motives may be suspected. I am already deeply indebted to Mr. Graham's goodness; and what, *in the usual ways of men*, is of infinitely greater importance, Mr. G. can do me service of the utmost importance in time to come. I was born a poor dog; and however I may occasionally pick a better bone than I used to do, I know I must live and die poor: but I will indulge the flattering faith that my poetry will considerably outlive my poverty; and, without any fustian affectation of spirit, I can promise and affirm that it must be no ordinary craving of the latter shall ever make me do any thing injurious to the honest fame of the former. Whatever may be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart, and an independent mind! It is no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr. Graham's chiefest praise that he can command influence; but it is his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman; and I trust it shall be mine to receive with thankfulness, and remember with undiminished gratitude.

R. B.

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* [This letter was written acknowledging the present of a valuable snuff-box, with a fine picture of Mary Queen of Scots on the lid. This was the gift of Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, in grateful return for the Poet's "*Lament*" of that ill-starred Princess. Lady Winifred was the last in descent of the noble family of Nithsdale; a lady equally generous and gentle, and who was not the less respected by the people around because her house had suffered in the cause of the Stuarts. The possessions of the family were once very ample: but few estates thrive in civil wars, rebellions, and confiscations: one noble barony after another passed out of the hands of the Maxwells: and the title was extinguished, never, I fear, to be revived.

The baronial Castle of Caerlaverock on the Solway, and the College of Lincluden on the banks of the Nith, are still included in the family possessions, and are preserved with more care than what is usual with ruins in the South of Scotland. At the family seat, the bed in which Queen Mary slept, during her flight from the fatal field of Langside: a letter from Charles the First, summoning Lord Maxwell with as many armed men as he could muster, to aid him in supporting the Crown against the Parliament: and the letter from the last Countess, describing the all but miraculous escape of her husband from the Tower of London in 1715—unite in telling the history of the House of Nithsdale, and the cause — the honourable cause—of its decline.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [The gentleman to whom the above letter is addressed, and which is for the first time published, was a writer to the Signet in Edinbugh, with whom the poet appears to have been on very intimate and friendly terms. For this and three other letters to the same individual, inserted afterwards, we are indebted to the activity and industry of Mr. P. Buchan of Aberdeen, who has been unremitting in his exertions to recover every scrap connected with the name or fame of our national Bard. In his communications to us, Mr. Buchan states that "the four letters referred to belong to Misses Ogilvie, daughters of the late Rev. and ingenious John Ogilvie, D. D. of Midmar, author of the poems on 'Providence,' 'Paradise,' and 'Britannia,' and that after having made the tour of part of Europe and America, they had again crossed the Atlantic, and are now first given to the public in this complete edition of Burns' works."—MOTHERWELL.]

‡ [So styled as President of the Convivial Society, known by the name of The Crochallan Fencibles.]

No. CXCVI.

TO Mr. PETER HILL.

Ellisland, 17th January, 1791.

TAKE these two guineas, and place them over against that damned account of yours! which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labours of Hercules; not all the Hebrews' three centuries of Egyptian bondage, were such an insuperable business, such an infernal task!! Poverty; thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell! where shall I find force of execration equal to the amplitude of thy demerits? Oppressed by thee, the venerable ancient, grown hoary in the practice of every virtue, laden with years and wretchedness, implores a little—little aid to support his existence, from a stony-hearted son of Mammon, whose sun of prosperity never knew a cloud; and is by him denied and insulted. Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul under the contumely, of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remarks neglected, and his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee: the children of folly and vice, though in common with thee the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies, as usual, bring him to want; and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. *His* early follies and extravagance are spirit and fire; *his* consequent wants are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a scoundrel and a lord.—Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot wheels of the coroneted RIP, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.

Well! divines may say of it what they please; but execration is to the mind what phlebotomy is to the body: the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations.*

R. B.

No. CXCVII.

TO Mr. ALEXR. CUNNINGHAM.†

Ellisland, 23d January, 1791.

MANY happy returns of the season to you, my dear friend! As many of the good things of this life as are consistent with the usual mixture of good and evil in the cup of Being!

I have just finished a poem (Tam o' Shanter) which you will receive enclosed. It is my first essay in the way of tales.

I have these several months been hammering at an elegy on the amiable and accomplished Miss Burnet. I have got, and can get, no farther than the following fragment, on which please give me your strictures. In all kinds of poetic composition, I set great store by your opinion; but in sentimental verses, in the poetry of the heart, no Roman Catholic ever set more

* [The poet's eloquent apostrophe to Poverty has all his usual strength of sentiment and language. In conversation he loved to dwell upon the subject: he felt that without wealth he could not have full independence: he beheld the little that his poems brought melt silently away, and he looked forward with much fear and with little hope.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [The following is an extract of a letter from Mr. Alexander Cunningham to the Poet, dated *Edinburgh, October 14th*, 1790.

"I lately received a letter from our friend Barncallie. [John Syme, Esq., of Barncallie, afterwards of Ryedale.] What a charming fellow lost to society—born to great expectations—with superior abilities, a pure heart, and untainted morals, his fate in life has been hard indeed—still I am persuaded he is happy; not like the gallant, the gay Lothario, but in the simplicity of rural enjoyment, unmixed with regret at the remembrance of the days of other years.

I saw Mr. Dunbar put under the cover of your newspaper, Mr. Wood's poem on Thomson. This poem has suggested an idea to me which you alone are capable to execute—a song adapted to *each* season of the year. The task is difficult, but the theme is charming; should you succeed, I will undertake to get new music worthy of the subject. What a fine field for your imagination, and who is there alive can draw so many beauties from Nature and pastoral imagery as yourself? It is, by the way, surprising that there does not exist, so far as I know, a proper *song* for each season. We have songs on hunting, fishing, skaiting, and one autumnal song, *Harvest Home*. As your muse is neither spavined nor rusty, you may mount the hill of Parnassus, and return with a sonnet in your pocket for every season. For my suggestions, if I be rude, correct me; if impertinent, chastise me; if presuming, despise me. But if you blend all my weaknesses, and pound out one grain of insincerity, then am I not thy

Faithful Friend &c."]

value on the infallibility of the Holy Father than I do on yours.

I mean the introductory couplets as text verses.

[Here follows a portion of the elegy on Miss Burnet, for the whole of which see pages 308-9.]

Let me hear from you soon. Adieu!

R. B.

No. CXCVIII.

TO A. F. TYTLER, Esq.

Ellisland, February, 1791.

Sir,

Nothing less than the unfortunate accident I have met with could have prevented my grateful acknowledgments for your letter. His own favourite poem, and that an essay in the walk of the muses entirely new to him, where consequently his hopes and fears were on the most anxious alarm for his success in the attempt; to have that poem so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever thrilled along the heart-strings of a poor poet. However, Providence, to keep up the proper proportion of evil with the good, which it seems is necessary in this sublunary state, thought proper to check my exultation by a very serious misfortune. A day or two after I received your letter, my horse came down with me and broke my right arm. As this is the first service my arm has done me since its disaster, I find myself unable to do more than just in general terms thank you for this additional instance of your patronage and friendship. As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there: one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out; as to the falling off in the catastrophe, for the reason you justly adduce it cannot easily be remedied. Your approbation, Sir, has given me such additional spirits to persevere in this species of poetic composition that I am already revolving two or three stories in my fancy. If I can bring these floating ideas to bear any kind of embodied form, it will give me an additional opportunity of assuring you how much I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.*

No. CXCIX.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 7th Feb. 1791.

When I tell you, Madam, that by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time, and that this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing; you will allow that it is

* [That no one welcomed the appearance of the far-famed Tam o' Shanter with a livelier sense of its merits than the late Lord Woodhouselee, the following letter will testify.

Edinburgh, March 12th, 1791.

"Mr. Hill yesterday put into my hands a sheet of *Grose's Antiquities*, containing a Poem of yours, entitled, *Tam o' Shanter*, a tale. The very high pleasure I have received from the perusal of this admirable piece I feel demands the warmest acknowledgments.

"Hill tells me he is to send off a packet for you this day; I cannot resist, therefore, putting on paper what I must have told you in person, had I met with you after the recent perusal of your tale, which is, that I feel I owe you a debt which, if undischarged, would reproach me with ingratitude. I have seldom in my life tasted of higher enjoyment from any work of genius than I have received from this composition; and I am much mistaken if this poem alone, had you never written another syllable, would not have been sufficient to have transmitted your name down to posterity with high reputation. In the introductory part, where you paint the character of your hero, and exhibit him at the ale-house *ingle*, with his tippling cronies, you have delineated nature with a humour and *naïveté* that would have done honour to Matthew Prior; but when you describe the infernal orgies of the witches' sabbath, and the hellish scenery in which they are exhibited, you display a power of imagination that Shakspeare himself could not have exceeded. I know not that I have ever met with a picture of more horrible fancy than the following:

'Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip sleight,
Each in his cauld hand held a light.'

But when I came to the succeeding lines, my blood ran cold within me:—

'A knife a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son of life bereft;
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft.'

"And here, after the two following lines, 'Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',' &c., the descriptive part might perhaps have been better closed than the four lines which succeed, which, though good in themselves, yet, as they derive all their merit from the satire they contain, are here rather misplaced among the circumstances of pure horror.† The initiation of the young witch is most happily described—the effect of her charms exhibited in the dance on Satan himself—the apostrophe—'Ah, little thought thy reverend graunie!'—the transport of Tam, who forgets his situation, and enters completely into the spirit of the scene, are all features of high merit in this excellent composition. The only fault it possesses is that the winding up, or conclusion, of the story, is not commensurate to the interest which is excited by the descriptive and characteristic painting of the preceding parts. —The preparation is fine, but the result is not adequate. But for this perhaps you have a good apology—you stick to the popular tale.

"And now that I have got out my mind, and feel a little relieved of the weight of that debt I owed you, let me end this desultory scroll by an advice;—You have proved your talent for a species of composition, in which but a very few of our own poets have succeeded—Go on—write more tales in the same style—you will eclipse Prior and La Fontaine; for, with equal wit, equal power of numbers, and equal *naïveté* of expression, you have a bolder and more vigorous imagination."]

† [Our Bard profited by Mr. Tytler's criticism, and expunged the four lines accordingly.

Currie

They are as follow:—

Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seam'd like a beggar's clout,
And priests' hearts rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk.]

too good an apology for my seemingly ungrateful silence. I am now getting better, and am able to rhyme a little, which implies some tolerable ease; as I cannot think that the most poetic genius is able to compose on the rack.

I do not remember if ever I mentioned to you my having an idea of composing an elegy on the late Miss Burnet, of Monboddo. I had the honour of being pretty well acquainted with her, and have seldom felt so much at the loss of an acquaintance as when I heard that so amiable and accomplished a piece of God's work was no more. I have, as yet, gone no farther than the following fragment, of which please let me have your opinion. You know that elegy is a subject so much exhausted that any new idea on the business is not to be expected: 'tis well if we can place an old idea in a new light. How far I have succeeded as to this last, you will judge from what follows:

(*See the Elegy page* 308.)

I have proceeded no further.

Your kind letter, with your kind *remembrance* of your godson, came safe. This last, Madam, is scarcely what my pride can bear. As to the little fellow, he is, partiality apart, the finest boy I have for a long time seen. He is now seventeen months old, has the small-pox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and never had a grain of doctor's drugs in his bowels.

I am truly happy to hear that the "little floweret" is blooming so fresh and fair, and that the "mother plant" is rather recovering her drooping head. Soon and well may her "cruel wounds" be healed! I have written thus far with a good deal of difficulty. When I get a little abler you shall hear farther from,

Madam, yours, R. B.

No. CC.

TO THE REV. ARCH. ALISON.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 14th Feb. 1791.

SIR,

YOU must by this time have set me down as one of the most ungrateful of men. You did me the honour to present me with a book, which does honour to science and the intellectual powers of men, and I have not even so much as acknowledged the receipt of it. The fact is, you yourself are to blame for it. Flattered as I was by your telling me that you wished to have my opinion of the work, the old spiritual enemy of mankind, who knows well that vanity is one of the sins that most easily beset me, put it into my head to ponder over the performance with the look-out of a critic, and to draw up, forsooth, a deep learned digest of strictures on a composition, of which, in fact, until I read the book, I did not even know the first principles. I own, Sir, that, at first glance, several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangor of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime, than the twingle twangle of a jew's-harp; that the delicate flexure of a rose-twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a burdock; and that from something innate and independent of all associations of ideas;—these I had set down as irrefragable, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith.—In short, Sir, except Euclid's Elements of Geometry, which I made a shift to unravel by my father's fire-side, in the winter evening of the first season I held the plough, I never read a book which gave me such a quantum of information, and added so much to my stock of ideas, as your "Essays on the Principles of Taste." One thing, Sir, you must forgive my mentioning as an uncommon merit in the work, I mean the language. To clothe abstract philosophy in elegance of style sounds something like a contradiction in terms; but you have convinced me that they are quite compatible.*

I enclose you some poetic bagatelles of my late composition. The one in print is my first essay in the way of telling a tale.

I am, Sir, &c.

R. B.

* [The eloquent Alison was much pleased with this rustic recognition of the principles which he laid down in his able and popular work. The theory, however, has been rudely shaken by various hands. A man must have forgot nature who at any time preferred a rank weed to a fragrant flower, or thought the skreigh of a clockin' hen more martial than the clang of a trumpet or the cry of the eagle. But "legs were made for stockings," says Voltaire, "therefore we wear stockings."—CUNNINGHAM.

"A present which Mr. Alison sent him afterwards of his 'Essays on Taste' drew from Burns a letter of acknowledgment, which I remember to have read with some degree of surprise at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed of the general principles of the doctrine of *association*. When I saw Mr. Alison in Shrop-shire last autumn, I forgot to enquire if the letter be still in existence. If it is, you may easily procure it by means of our friend Mr. Houlbrooke."—DUGALD STEWART.

The above letter is the one alluded to by the learned Professor.

"It is difficult to read without a smile that letter of Mr. Dugald Stewart, in which he describes himself to Mr. Alison, as being surprised to discover that Burns, after reading the latter author's elegant Essay on Taste, had really been able to form some shrewd-enough notion of the general principles of the association of *ideas!* It is amusing enough to trace the lingering reluctance of some of these polished scholars; about admitting even to themselves in his absence, what it is certain they all felt sufficiently when they were actually in his presence. The extraordinary resources Burns displayed in conversation—the strong vigorous sagacity of his observations on life and manners—the splendour of his wit, and the glowing energy of his eloquence, when his feelings were stirred, made him the object of serious admiration among those practised masters of the art of *talk*; that galaxy of eminent men of letters, who, in their various departments, shed lustre at that period on the name of Scotland."—LOCKHART.

The doctrine here alluded to is one peculiar, we believe, to the Scotch school of metaphysicians, and mainly consists in

No. CCI.

TO THE Rev. G. BAIRD.*

Ellisland, February, 1791.

Reverend Sir,

Why did you, my dear Sir, write to me in such a hesitating style on the business of poor Bruce? Don't I know, and have I not felt, the many ills, the peculiar ills, that poetic flesh is heir to? You shall have your choice of all the unpublished poems I have; and, had your letter had my direction so as to have reached me sooner (it only came to my hand this moment), I should have directly put you out of suspense on the subject. I only ask that some prefatory advertisement in the book, as well as the subscription bills, may bear that the publication is solely for the benefit of Bruce's mother. I would not put it into the power of ignorance to surmise, or malice to insinuate, that I clubbed a share in the work from mercenary motives. Nor need you give me credit for any remarkable generosity in my part of the business. I have such a host of peccadilloes, failings, follies, and backslidings (any body but myself might perhaps give some of them a worse appellation), that by way of some balance, however trifling, in the account, I am fain to do any good that occurs in my very limited power to a fellow-creature, just for the selfish purpose of clearing a little of the vista of retrospection.

* * * * *

R. B.

No. CCII.

TO Dr. MOORE.

Ellisland, 28th February, 1791.

I do not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to *Grose's Antiquities of Scotland.* If you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof sheet, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view: it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard; and also of shewing you that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish.†

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an assertion that our ideas of beauty in objects of all kinds arise from our associating with them some other ideas of an agreeable kind. For instance, our notion of beauty in the cheek of a pretty maiden arises from our notions of her health, innocence, and so forth; our notion of the beauty of a Highland prospect, such as the Trosachs, from our notions of the romantic kind of life formerly led in it; as if there was no female beauty independent of both health and innocence, or fine scenery where men had not formerly worn tartans and claymores. The whole of this letter of Burns is, in reality (though perhaps unmeant by him), a satire on this doctrine, which, notwithstanding the eloquence of an Alison, a Stewart, and a Jeffrey, must now be considered as amongst the dreams of philosophy.—Chambers.]

* [The poet's reverend correspondent solicited his help in the contemplated edition of Bruce in these words:—

"*London, 8th February*, 1791.

"Sir,

"I trouble you with this letter to inform you that I am in hopes of being able very soon to bring to the press a new edition (long since talked of) of Michael Bruce's Poems. The profits of the edition are to go to his mother—a woman of eighty years of age—poor and helpless. The poems are to be published by subscription; and it may be possible, I think, to make out a 2*s.* 6*d.* or 3*s.* volume, with the assistance of a few hitherto unpublished verses, which I have got from the mother of the poet.

"But the design I have in view in writing to you is not merely to inform you of these facts; it is to solicit the aid of your name and pen in support of the scheme. The reputation of Bruce is already high with every reader of classical taste, and I shall be anxious to guard against tarnishing his character, by allowing any new poems to appear that may lower it. For this purpose, the MSS. I am in possession of have been submitted to the revision of some whose critical talents I can trust to, and I mean still to submit them to others.

"May I beg to know, therefore, if you will take the trouble of perusing the MSS.—of giving your opinion, and suggesting what curtailments, alterations, or amendments, occur to you as advisable? And will you allow us to let it be known that a few lines by you will be added to the volume?

"I know the extent of this request. It is bold to make it. But I have this consolation, that, though you see it proper to refuse it, you will not blame me for having made it; you will see my apology in the *motive*.

"May I just add, that Michael Bruce is one in whose company, from his past appearance, you would not, I am convinced, blush to be found, and as I would submit every line of his that should now be published to your own criticisms, you would be assured that nothing derogatory either to him or you would be admitted in that appearance he may make in future.

"You have already paid an honourable tribute to kindred genius, in Fergusson—I fondly hope that the mother of Bruce will experience your patronage.

"I wish to have the subscription papers circulated by the 14th of March, Bruce's birth-day; which I understand some friends in Scotland talk this year of observing—at that time it will be resolved, I imagine, to place a plain, humble stone over his grave. This, at least, I trust you will agree to do—to furnish, in a few couplets, an *inscription* for it.

"On these points may I solicit an answer as early as possible; a short delay might disappoint us in procuring that relief to the mother which is the object of the whole.

"You will be pleased to address for me under cover to the Duke of Athole, London." G. B.

P.S. Have you ever seen an engraving published here some time ago, from one of your poems, "*O thou pale Orb?*" If you have not, I shall have the pleasure of sending it to you.]

† [Dr. Moore, it would appear, was less enthusiastic than Lord Woodhouselee in the cause of Tam o'Shanter; nor did he feel the exquisite poetry of the Elegy on Matthew Henderson—he has spoken for himself on the subject—the following is his letter:

London, 29th March, 1791.

"Dear Sir,

"Your letter of the 28th February I received only two days ago, and this day I had the pleasure of waiting on the Rev. Mr. Baird, at the Duke of Athole's, who had been so obliging as to transmit it to me, with the printed verses on Alloa Church, the Elegy on Capt. Henderson, and the Epitaph. There are many poetical beauties in the former; what I particularly admire are the three striking similes from

'Or like the snow falls on the river,'

and the eight lines which begin with

'By this time he was cross the ford,'

so exquisitely expressive of the superstitious impressions of the country. And the twenty-two lines from

'Coffins stood round like open presses,'

The *Elegy on Captain Henderson* is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have past that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living: and as a very orthodox text, I forget where in scripture, says, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" so say I, whatsoever is not detrimental to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by his creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or still more dearly beloved mistress, who is gone to the world of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with *Percy's Reliques of English Poetry*. By the way, how much is every honest heart, which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice, obliged to you for your glorious story of Buchanan and Targe! 'Twas an unequivocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul giving Targe the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not.

I have just read over, once more of many times, your *Zeluco*. I marked with my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one or two, I think, which, with humble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe these marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart is your and Fielding's province, beyond any other novelist I have ever perused. Richardson indeed might, perhaps, be excepted; but unhappily, his *dramatis personæ* are beings of another world; and, however they may captivate the inexperienced, romantic fancy of a boy or a girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper years.

As to my private concerns, I am going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of Excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn; the patron from whom all my fame and fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence; as soon as the prince's friends had got in (and every dog you know has his day), my getting forward in the Excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am! and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life as I could wish, I shall, if I am favoured so much by the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors, this is one of the best, *Better be the head o' the commonalty than the tail o' the gentry.*

But I am got on a subject which, however interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page, and close this with assuring you how sincerely I have the honour to be, Yours, &c. R. B.

* * * *

Written on the blank leaf of a book, which

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which, in my opinion, are equal to the ingredients of Shakspeare's cauldron in *Macbeth*.

"As for the *Elegy*, the chief merit of it consists in the graphical description of the objects belonging to the country in which the poet writes, and which none but a Scottish poet could have described, and none but a real poet and close observer of Nature could have *so* described.

"There is something original, and wonderfully pleasing, in the *Epitaph*.

"I remember you once hinted before, what you repeat in your last, that you had made some remarks on *Zeluco*, on the margin. I should be very glad to see them, and regret you did not send them before the last edition, which is just published. Pray transcribe them for me; I sincerely value your opinion very highly, and pray do not suppress one of those in which you *censure* the sentiment or expression. Trust me it will break no squares between us—I am not akin to the Bishop of Grenada.

"I must now mention what has been on my mind for some time; I cannot help thinking you imprudent, in scattering abroad so many copies of your verses. It is most natural to give a few to confidential friends, particularly to those who are connected with the subject, or who are perhaps themselves the subject, but this ought to be done under promise not to give other copies. Of the poem you sent me on Queen Mary, I refused every solicitation for copies, but I lately saw it in a newspaper. My motive for cautioning you on this subject is that I wish to engage you to collect all your fugitive pieces, not already printed, and after they have been reconsidered, and polished to the utmost of your power, I would have you publish them by another subscription; in promoting of which I will exert myself with pleasure.

"In your future compositions I wish you would use the modern English. You have shewn your powers in Scottish sufficiently. Although in certain subjects it gives additional zest to the humour, yet it is lost to the English; and why should you write only for a part of the island, when you can command the admiration of the whole?

"If you chance to write to my friend Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop, I beg to be affectionately remembered to her. She must not judge of the warmth of my sentiments respecting her, by the number of my letters; I hardly ever write a line but on business; and I do not know that I should have scribbled all this to you, but for the business part, that is, to instigate you to a new publication; and to tell you that, when you think you have a sufficient number to make a volume, you should set your friends on getting subscriptions. I wish I could have a few hours' conversation with you; I have many things to say, which I cannot write. If I ever go to Scotland, I will let you know, that you may meet me at your own house, or my friend Mrs. Hamilton's, or both.

"Adieu, my dear Sir, &c."]

I presented to a very young lady, whom I had formerly characterised under the denomination of *The Rose Bud.*—(See Lines to Miss Cruikshank, page 249.)

No. CCIII.

TO Mr. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM. *

Ellisland, 12th March, 1791.

If the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them. For my own part, a thing that I have just composed always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an author will ever view his own works. I believe, in general, novelty has something in it that inebriates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxication, and leaves the poor patient, as usual, with an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced, in the revolution of many a hymeneal honeymoon. But lest I sink into stupid prose, and so sacrilegiously intrude on the office of my parish priest, I shall fill up the page in my own way, and give you another song of my late composition, which will appear perhaps in Johnson's work, as well as the former.

You must know a beautiful Jacobite air, *There'll never be peace 'till Jamie comes hame.* When political combustion ceases to be the object of princes and patriots, it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets.

"By yon castle wa' at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, tho' his head it was grey;
And as he was singing, the tears fast down came—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame."†

[*See page* 397.]

If you like the air, and if the stanza hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me if, by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion to "the memory of joys that are past," to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure. But I have scribbled on 'till I hear the clock has intimated the near approach of—

"That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane."—

So good night to you! Sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams! Apropos, how do you like this thought in a ballad I have just now on the tapis?

"I look to the west when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
Far, far in the west is he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my babie and me!"

Good night, once more, and God bless you!

R. B.

No. CCIV.

TO Mr. ALEXANDER DALZEL,‡

FACTOR, FINDLAYSTON.

Ellisland, 19th March, 1791.

My dear Sir:

I have taken the liberty to frank this letter to you, as it encloses an idle poem of mine, which I send you; and God knows you may perhaps pay dear enough for it if you read it through. Not that this is my own opinion; but the author, by the time he has composed and corrected his work, has quite pored away all his powers of critical discrimination.

I can easily guess from my own heart what you have felt on a late most melancholy event. God knows what I have suffered, at the loss of my best friend, my first and dearest patron and benefactor; the man to whom I owe all that I am and have! I am gone into mourning for him, and with more sincerity of grief than I fear some will, who by nature's ties ought to feel on the occasion.

I will be exceedingly obliged to you indeed, to let me know the news of the noble family, how the poor mother and the two sisters support their loss. I had a packet of poetic bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honoured remains of my noble patron are designed to be brought to the family burial place. Dare I trouble you

* [This gentleman was joyous and companionable; told a pleasing story; sung songs merry or sad with much taste, and was always welcome where wine flowed and mirth abounded. He was from first to last the stedfast friend of Burns; he bestirred himself actively, too, in behalf of the poet's family.]

† [This beautiful little Jacobite ditty having appeared in Johnson's Museum with the old song mark at it, it has been received as an old song all over Scotland. There *was* an old song, but I do not know where to find it. I remember only two lines:

My heart it is sair, and will soon break in twa;
For there's few good fellows sin' Jamie's awa.

This last line is the name of the air in the very old collections of Scottish tunes.—Hogg.]

‡ [This gentleman, the factor, or steward, of Burns's noble friend, Lord Glencairn, with a view to encourage a second edition of the poems, laid the volume before his lordship, with such an account of the rustic bard's situation and prospects as from his slender acquaintance with him he could furnish. The result, as communicated to Burns by Mr. Dalzel, is highly creditable to the character of Lord Glencairn. After reading the book, his lordship declared that its merits greatly exceeded his expectation, and he took it with him as a *literary curiosity* to Edinburgh. He repeated his wishes to be of service to Burns, and desired Mr. Dalzel to inform him that, in patronizing the book, ushering it with effect into the world, or treating with the booksellers, he would most willingly give every aid in his power; adding his request that Burns would take the earliest opportunity of letting him know in what way or manner he could best further his interests.—Cromek.]

to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression.

R. B.

No. CCV.

TO ———.

Ellisland, March, 1791.

DEAR SIR:

I AM exceedingly to blame in not writing you long ago; but the truth is that I am the most indolent of all human beings; and when I matriculate in the Herald's office, I intend that my supporters shall be two sloths, my crest a slow-worm, and the motto, "Deil tak the foremost." So much by way of apology for not thanking you sooner for your kind execution of my commission.

I would have sent you the poem; but somehow or other it found its way into the public papers, where you must have seen it.*

I am ever, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

R. B.

No. CCVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 11th April, 1791.

I AM once more able, my honoured friend, to return you, with my own hand, thanks for the many instances of your friendship, and particularly for your kind anxiety in this last disaster that my evil genius had in store for me. However, life is chequered—joy and sorrow—for on Saturday morning last, Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy; rather stouter, but not so handsome as your godson was at his time of life. Indeed I look on your little name-sake to be my *chef d'œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as I look on Tam o' Shanter to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis true, both the one and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery that might perhaps be as well spared; but then they also shew, in my opinion, a force of genius, and a finishing polish, that I despair of ever excelling. Mrs. Burns is getting stout again, and laid as lustily about her to-day at breakfast as a reaper from the corn-ridge. That is the peculiar privilege and blessing of our hale, sprightly damsels, that are bred among the *hay and heather.*† We cannot hope for that highly polished mind, that charming delicacy of soul, which is found among the female world in the more elevated stations of life, and which is certainly by far the most bewitching charm in the famous cestus of Venus.‡ It is indeed such an inestimable treasure that, where it can be had in its native heavenly purity, unstained by some one or other of the many shades of affectation, and unalloyed by some one or other of the many species of caprice, I declare to heaven, I should think it cheaply purchased at the expense of every other earthly good! But as this angelic creature is, I am afraid, extremely rare in any station and rank of life, and totally denied to such a humble one as mine, we meaner mortals must put up with the next rank of female excellence—as fine a figure and face we can produce as any rank of life whatever; rustic, native grace; unaffected modesty, and unsullied purity; nature's mother-wit, and the rudiments of taste; a simplicity of soul, unsuspicious of, because unacquainted with, the crooked ways of a selfish, interested, disingenuous world; and the dearest charm of all the rest, a yielding sweetness of disposition, and a generous warmth of heart, grateful for love on our part, and ardently glowing with a more than equal return; these, with a healthy frame, a sound, vigorous constitution, which your higher ranks can scarcely

* [The poem to which the poet alludes is the Lament of Mary Queen of Scots; that his works found their way to the newspapers could excite no wonder; he gave copies to many of his friends, and they in their turn distributed copies among their acquaintances. Burns seems never to have surmised that he was injuring his own pocket by this practice; the poems which he wrote at Ellisland, and the songs which he composed for Johnson and Thomson, would have made a volume, and brought him a thousand pounds.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [To illustrate what the poet says here, it may be mentioned that the accouchement had taken place (as we learn from his family bible) only two days before, namely, April 9th. This child was named William Nicol, after the eccentric teacher of the Edinburgh High School.]

‡ [Homer's description of the Cestus of Venus has been rendered into English by many skilful hands; here are four versions:

"In this was every art and every charm,
To win the wisest, and the coldest warm;
Fond love, the gentle vow, the gay desire,
The kind deceit, the still-reviving fire,
Persuasive speech, and more persuasive sighs,
Silence that spoke, and eloquence of eyes."

POPE.

"She spoke, and from her heaving bosom loosed the various girdle with care. There were contained her soul-winning charms; there was love; there melting desire; there, of lovers, the tender vows—the pleasing flattery was there which takes by stealth the souls of the wise."—MACPHERSON.

"It was an ambush of sweet snares, replete
With love, desire, soft intercourse of hearts,
And music of resistless whisper'd sounds,
Which from the wisest win their best resolves."

COWPER.

"Then from her breast unclasp'd the embroider'd zone,
Where each embellishment divinely shone:
There dwell the allurements, all that love inspire,
There soft seduction, there intense desire,
There witchery of words, whose flatteries weave
Wiles that the wisdom of the wise deceive."

SOTHEBY.]

ever hope to enjoy, are the charms of lovely woman in my humble walk of life.

This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made. Do let me hear, by the first post, how *cher petit Monsieur** comes on with the small-pox. May almighty goodness preserve and restore him!

R. B.

No. CCVII.

TO Mr. ALEX. CUNNINGHAM.

11th June, 1791.

Let me interest you, my dear Cunningham, in behalf of the gentleman who waits on you with this. He is a Mr. Clarke, of Moffat, principal schoolmaster there, and is at present suffering severely under the persecution of one or two powerful individuals of his employers. He is accused of harshness to boys that were placed under his care. God help the teacher, if a man of sensibility and genius, and such is my friend Clarke, when a booby father presents him with his booby son, and insists on lighting up the rays of science in a fellow's head whose skull is impervious and inaccessible by any other way than a positive fracture with a cudgel: a fellow whom in fact it savours of impiety to attempt making a scholar of, as he has been marked a blockhead in the book of fate, at the almighty fiat of his Creator.

The patrons of Moffat-school are, the ministers, magistrates, and town-council of Edinburgh, and as the business comes now before them, let me beg my dearest friend to do every thing in his power to serve the interests of a man of genius and worth, and a man whom I particularly respect and esteem. You know some good fellows among the magistracy and council, but particularly you have much to say with a reverend gentleman to whom you have the honour of being very nearly related, and whom this country and age have had the honour to produce. I need not name the historian of Charles V.† I tell him, through the medium of his nephew's influence, that Mr. Clarke is a gentleman who will not disgrace even his patronage. I know the merits of the cause thoroughly, and say it, that my friend is falling a sacrifice to prejudiced ignorance.

God help the children of dependence! Hated and persecuted by their enemies, and too often, alas! almost unexceptionably, received by their friends with disrespect and reproach, under the thin disguise of cold civility and humiliating advice. O! to be a sturdy savage, stalking in the pride of his independence, amid the solitary wilds of his deserts, rather than in civilized life, helplessly to tremble for a subsistence, precarious as the caprice of a fellow-creature! Every man has his virtues, and no man is without his failings; and curse on that privileged plain-dealing of friendship which, in the hour of my calamity, cannot reach forth the helping hand without at the same time pointing out those failings, and apportioning them their share in procuring my present distress. My friends, for such the world calls ye, and such ye think yourselves to be, pass by my virtues, if you please, but do, also, spare my follies; the first will witness in my breast for themselves, and the last will give pain enough to the ingenuous mind without you. And, since deviating more or less from the paths of propriety and rectitude must be incident to human nature, do thou, Fortune, put it in my power always from myself and of myself to bear the consequence of those errors! I do not want to be independent that I may sin, but I want to be independent in my sinning.

To return in this rambling letter to the subject I set out with, let me recommend my friend, Mr. Clarke, to your acquaintance and good offices; his worth entitles him to the one, and his gratitude will merit the other.‡ I long much to hear from you. Adieu!

R. B

No. CCVIII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Ellisland, June, 1791.

My Lord,

Language sinks under the ardour of my feelings when I would thank your lordship for the honour you have done me in inviting me to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson.§ In my first enthusiasm in reading the card you did me the honour to write me,

* [Mrs. Henri's child, and the grand-child of Mrs. Dunlop.—See note to the Verses on the Birth of a posthumous Child, page 249.]

† [Dr. Robertson was uncle to Mr. Alex. Cunningham.]

‡ [To the person on whose behalf he sought to interest his friend, Burns addressed many letters, which were carefully preserved till the death of Mr. Clarke, when his widow, offended by some free language in which they indulged, committed them to the flames.]

§ [In the following terms the noble lord invited the poet to his seat: *Dryburgh Abbey, June 17th*, 1791.

"Lord Buchan has the pleasure to invite Mr. Burns to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson, on Ednam Hill, on the 22nd of September; for which day perhaps his muse may inspire an ode suited to the occasion. Suppose Mr. Burns should, leaving the Nith, go across the country, and meet the Tweed at the nearest point from his farm—and, wandering along the pastoral banks of Thomson's pure parent stream, catch inspiration on the devious walk, till he finds Lord Buchan sitting on the ruins of Dryburgh. There the Commendator will give him a hearty welcome, and try to light his lamp at the pure flame of native genius, upon the altar of Caledonian virtue. This poetical perambulation of the Tweed is a thought of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, and of Lord Minto, followed out by his accomplished grandson, the present Sir Gilbert, who having been with Lord Buchan lately, the project was renewed, and will, they hope, be executed in the manner proposed."]

I overlooked every obstacle, and determined to go; but I fear it will not be in my power. A week or two's absence, in the very middle of my harvest, is what I much doubt I dare not venture on. I once already made a pilgrimage *up* the whole course of the Tweed, and fondly would I take the same delightful journey *down* the windings of that delightful stream.

Your lordship hints at an ode for the occasion: but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired.—I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task. However, it affords me an opportunity of approaching your lordship, and declaring how sincerely and gratefully I have the honour to be, &c., R. B.*

[Here follow the verses, for which see page 310.]

No. CCIX.

TO MR. THOMAS SLOAN.†

Ellisland, Sept. 1, 1791.

MY DEAR SLOAN,

SUSPENSE is worse than disappointment; for that reason I hurry to tell you that I just now learn that Mr. Ballantine does not choose to interfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it.

You blame me for not writing you sooner, but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information—your address.

However, you know equally well my hurried life, indolent temper, and strength of attachment. It must be a longer period than the longest life "in the world's hale and undegenerate days," that will make me forget so dear a friend as Mr. Sloan. I am prodigal enough at times, but I will not part with such a treasure as that.

I can easily enter into the *embarras* of your present situation. You know my favourite quotation from Young—

> ———"On Reason build RESOLVE!
> That column of true majesty in man."—

And that other favourite one from Thomson's Alfred—

> "What proves the hero truly GREAT,
> Is never, never to despair."

Or shall I quote you an author of your acquaintance?

> "——Whether DOING, SUFFERING, or FORBEARING,
> You may do miracles by—PERSEVERING."

I have nothing new to tell you. The few friends we have are going on in the old way. I sold my crop on this day se'ennight, and sold it very well. A guinea an acre, on an average, above value. But such a scene of drunkenness was hardly ever seen in this country. After the roup was over, about thirty people engaged in a battle, every man for his own hand, and fought it out for three hours. Nor was the scene much better in the house. No fighting, indeed, but folks lying drunk on the floor, and decanting, until both my dogs got so drunk by attending them that they could not stand. You will easily guess how I enjoyed the scene; as I was no farther over than you used to see me.

Mrs. B. and family have been in Ayr-shire these many weeks.

Farewell! and God bless you, my dear friend! R. B.

No. CCX.

TO LADY E. CUNNINGHAM.‡

Ellisland, September, 1791.

MY LADY,

I WOULD, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of

* [The public praised the verses, on which the Commendator of Dryburgh wrote to the poet as follows:—

September 16*th*, 1791.

"YOUR address to the shade of Thomson has been well received by the public; and though I should disapprove of your allowing Pegasus to ride you off the field of your honourable and useful profession, yet I cannot resist an impulse which I feel at this moment to suggest to your muse, *Harvest Home*, as an excellent subject for her grateful song, in which the peculiar aspects and manners of our country might furnish an excellent portrait and landscape of Scotland, for the employment of happy moments of leisure and recess, from your more important occupations.

"Your *Halloween*, and *Saturday Night*, will remain to distant posterity as interesting pictures of rural innocence and happiness in your native country, and were happily written in the dialect of the people; but *Harvest Home* being suited to descriptive poetry, except where colloquial, may escape the disguise of a dialect which admits of no elegance or dignity of expression. Without the assistance of any god or goddess, and without the invocation of any foreign muse, you may convey in epistolary form the description of a scene so gladdening and picturesque, with all the concomitant local position, landscape and costume, contrasting the peace, improvement, and happiness of the borders, of the once hostile nations of Britain, with their former oppression and misery, and showing, in lively and beautiful colours, the beauties and joys of a rural life. And as the unvitiated heart is naturally disposed to overflow with gratitude in the moment of prosperity, such a subject would furnish you with an amiable opportunity of perpetuating the names of Glencairn, Miller, and your other eminent benefactors; which, from what I know of your spirit, and have seen of your poems and letters, will not deviate from the chastity of praise, that is so uniformly united to true taste and genius."]

† [Thomas Sloan was a west of Scotland man, and seems to have been on intimate terms with Burns. He accompanied him on that excursion to Wanlockhead when Burns moved a blacksmith, by his verse and his wit, to frost the shoes of his horse, as related at page 306.]

‡ [Sister of the recently deceased, and of the then existing, Earls of Glencairn. Her ladyship died unmarried, in August, 1804.]

sending you any thing I compose in my poetical way; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the first piece I should do myself the honour of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardour of my heart, the enclosed had been much more worthy your perusal: as it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship's feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late Earl of Glencairn, I would wish to shew, as openly, that my heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his lordship's memory were not the "mockery of woe." Nor shall my gratitude perish with me!—If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!

I was about to say, my lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world.*

R. B.

No. CCXI.

TO COLONEL FULLARTON,

OF FULLARTON.†

Ellisland, October 3d, 1791.

SIR,

I HAVE just this minute got the frank, and next minute must send it to post, else I purposed to have sent you two or three other bagatelles that might have amused a vacant hour, about as well as "Six excellent new Songs," or the "Aberdeen prognostications for the year to come."‡ I shall probably trouble you soon with another packet, about the gloomy month of November, when the people of England hang and drown themselves — any thing generally is better than one's own thoughts.

Fond as I may be of my own productions, it is not for their sake that I am so anxious to send you them. I am ambitious, covetously ambitious, of being known to a gentleman whom I am proud to call my countryman;§ a gentleman who was a foreign ambassador as soon as he was a man; and a leader of armies as soon as he was a soldier; and that with an

* [The poem enclosed was The Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn. It is probable that the Earl's sister thought well of the verses—for they were published soon after. The poet sent copies of "The Lament" and "The Whistle" to Mr. Tytler, afterwards Lord Woodhouselee; the answer which he received contains judicious censure as well as merited praise:

Edinburgh, November 27th, 1791.

"DEAR SIR,

"YOU have much reason to blame me for neglecting till now to acknowledge the receipt of a most agreeable packet, containing *The Whistle*, a ballad; and the *Lament;* which reached me about six weeks ago in London, whence I am just returned. Your letter was forwarded to me from Edinburgh, where, as I observed by the date, it had lain for some days. This was an additional reason for me to have answered it immediately on receiving it; but the truth was, the bustle of business, engagements and confusion of one kind or another, in which I found myself immersed all the time I was in London absolutely put it out of my power. But to have done with apologies, let me now endeavour to prove myself in some degree deserving of the very flattering compliment you pay me, by giving you at least a frank and a candid, if it should not be a judicious, criticism on the poems you sent me.

"The ballad of 'The Whistle' is, in my opinion, truly excellent. The old tradition which you have taken up is the best adapted for a Bacchanalian composition of any I have ever met with, and you have done it full justice. In the first place, the strokes of wit arise naturally from the subject, and are uncommonly happy. For example,

'The bands grew the tighter, the more they were wet.'

'Cynthia hinted she'd find them next morn.'

'Tho' fate said a hero should perish in light,
So up rose bright Phœbus, and down fell the knight.'

In the next place, you are singularly happy in the discrimination of your heroes, and in giving each the sentiments and language suitable to his character. And lastly, you have much merit in the delicacy of the panegyric which you have contrived to throw on each of the *dramatis personæ*, perfectly appropriate to his character. The compliment to Sir Robert, the blunt soldier, is peculiarly fine. In short, this composition, in my opinion, does you great honour, and I see not a line or a word in it which I could wish to be altered.

"As to 'The Lament,' I suspect, from some expressions in your letter to me, that you are more doubtful with respect to the merits of this piece than of the other, and I own I think you have reason; for, although it contains some beautiful stanzas, as the first, 'The wind blew hollow,' &c.; the fifth, 'Ye scatter'd birds;' the thirteenth, 'Awake thy last sad voice,' &c., yet it appears to me faulty as a whole, and inferior to several of those you have already published in the same strain. My principal objection lies against the plan of the piece. I think it was unnecessary and improper to put the lamentation in the mouth of a fictitious character, an *aged bard.*—It had been much better to have lamented your patron in your own person, to have expressed your genuine feelings for his loss, and to have spoken the language of nature, rather than that of fiction, on the subject. Compare this with your poem of the same title in your printed volume, which begins, '*O thou pale Orb!*' and observe what it is that forms the charm of that composition. It is that it speaks the language of *truth* and of *nature.*

"The change is, in my opinion, injudicious, too, in this respect, that an *aged* bard has much less need of a patron and protector than a *young* one. I have thus given you with much freedom my opinion of both the pieces. I should have made a very ill return to the compliment you paid me, if I had given you any other than my genuine sentiments.

"It will give me great pleasure to hear from you when you find leisure, and I beg you will believe me ever

Dear Sir, yours, &c."]

† [This gentleman, it will be recollected, is honourably mentioned in "The Vision."—See page 206, "Brydone's brave ward," &c.

‡ [A conspicuous branch of popular literature in Scotland till a recent period consisted of coarse brochures of four leaves, sold at a half-penny, and generally containing something appropriate to the title of "Six Excellent New Songs," &c. The other branch of popular literature mentioned in the text consisted of almanacks, published at Aberdeen, at the price of a penny.]

§ [Meaning, probably, a native of the same county.]

eclat unknown to the usual minions of a Court —men who, with all the adventitious advantages of princely connections, and princely fortunes, must yet, like the caterpillar, labour a whole life-time before they reach the wished-for height, there to roost a stupid chrysalis, and doze out the remaining glimmering existence of old age.

If the gentleman that accompanied you when you did me the honour of calling on me is with you, I beg to be respectfully remembered to him. I have the honour to be your highly obliged and most devoted humble servant,*

R. B.

No. CCXII.

TO Mr. AINSLIE.

Ellisland, 1791.

My dear Ainslie,

Can you minister to a mind diseased? can you, amid the horrors of penitence, regret, remorse, head-ache, nausea, and all the rest of the d——d hounds of hell that beset a poor wretch who has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness—can you speak peace to a troubled soul?

Miserable perdu that I am, I have tried every thing that used to amuse me, but in vain: here must I sit, a monument of the vengeance laid up in store for the wicked, slowly counting every chick of the clock as it slowly, slowly, numbers over these lazy scoundrels of hours, who, d—n them, are ranked up before me, every one at his neighbour's backside, and every one with a burthen of anguish on his back, to pour on my devoted head—and there is none to pity me. My wife scolds me; my business torments me, and my sins come staring me in the face, every one telling a more bitter tale than his fellow.—When I tell you even * * * has lost its power to please, you will guess something of my hell within, and all around me—I began *Elibanks and Elibraes*, but the stanzas fell unenjoyed and unfinished from my listless tongue: at last I luckily thought of reading over an old letter of yours, that lay by me in my book-case, and I felt something, for the first time since I opened my eyes, of pleasurable existence.——Well—I begin to breathe a little, since I began to write to you. How are you, and what are you doing? How goes Law? Apropos, for connexion's sake do not address to me supervisor, for that is an honour I cannot pretend to—I am on the list, as we call it, for a supervisor, and will be called out by and bye to act as one; but at present, I am a simple gauger, tho' t'other day I got an appointment to an excise division of 25*l. per annum* better than the rest. My present income, down money, is 70*l. per annum*.

I have one or two good fellows here whom you would be glad to know.† R. B.

No. CCXIII.

TO Miss DAVIES.‡

It is impossible, Madam, that the generous warmth and angelic purity of your youthful

* [This letter originally appeared in the Paisley Magazine, 1828, accompanied by the following note. "With the following relic from the pen of our Poet, we have been favoured by a friend. It was addressed to Colonel Fullarton whilst resident in England, accompanied as would also seem by some verses. It is not perhaps to be expected that any thing will be discovered tending further to elucidate the character of Burns: indeed, his genius may be said to have been of such an open and uncompromising nature as irrepressibly to have unfolded in almost every sentence of his inimitable writings. Yet, as an additional fragment of that frame of thought so characteristic of its great author, the present letter is worthy of preservation. Colonel Fullarton had not been introduced to Burns prior to his return from India about 1784; but, having at this period met with him, he continued ever after an enthusiastic and warm friend of his distinguished countryman; and, to his imperishable honour, he has been commemorated in some of the Poet's finest productions. We shall only farther add that the original letter remains in the possession of the honourable Mrs. Hamilton Fullarton, the Colonel's widow, and till now has never been published.

"The letter of the Poet to his cousin James Burness, dated June 21, 1783, exhibits Burns in the character of a man of business, and we humbly think he writes upon the evils of paper currency, the depression of trade, and the decay of the agricultural interests, with the best political economist of the present day. He has generally been supposed to be a very indifferent farmer, but the following compliment paid to his observation in dairy matters, by no incompetent judge, we think right to insert. In a note to a General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr, by Colonel Fullarton, of Fullarton, drawn up for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture, and internal improvement, and published at Edinburgh, 1793, the author says, at p. 58, 'In order to prevent the danger arising from horned cattle in studs and straw yards, the best mode is to cut out the budding knob, or root of the horn, while the calf is very young. This was suggested to me by Mr. Robert Burns, whose general talents are no less conspicuous than the poetic powers which have done so much honour to the county where he was born.' "]

† [The poet was one of the most candid of correspondents: he confessed his follies freely to his friends; nay, it has been surmised that he sometimes aggravated them, in order to excuse his indolence in answering letters—or from imagining that it was incumbent in a son of song to maintain a reputation for irregularity.—Cunningham.]

‡ [Those who remember the pleasing society which, in the year 1791, Dumfries afforded, cannot have forgotten "the charming lovely Davies" of the lyrics of Burns. Her maiden name was Deborah, and she was the youngest daughter of Dr. Davies of Tenby in Pembroke-shire; between her and the Riddels of Friars Carse there were ties of blood or friendship, and her eldest sister, Harriet, was married to Captain Adam Gordon, of the noble family of Kenmure. Her education was superior to that of most young ladies of her station of life; she was equally agreeable and witty; her company was much courted in Nithsdale, and others than Burns respected her talents in poetic composition. She was then in her twentieth year, and so little and so handsome that some one, who desired to compliment her, welcomed her to the Vale of Nith as one of the Graces in miniature.

It was the destiny of Miss Davies to become acquainted with Captain Delany, a pleasant and sightly man, who made himself acceptable to her by sympathizing in her pursuits, and by writing verses to her, calling her his "Stella," an ominous name, which might have brought the memory of Swift's unhappy mistress to her mind. An offer of marriage

mind can have any idea of that moral disease under which I unhappily must rank as the chief of sinners; I mean a torpitude of the moral powers, that may be called a lethargy of conscience. — In vain Remorse rears her horrent crest, and rouses all her snakes: beneath the deadly-fixed eye and leaden hand of Indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat, slumbering out the rigours of winter in the chink of a ruined wall. Nothing less, Madam, could have made me so long neglect your obliging commands. Indeed I had one apology — the bagatelle was not worth presenting. Besides, so strongly am I interested in Miss Davies's fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes, that to make her the subject of a silly ballad is downright mockery of these ardent feelings; 'tis like an impertinent jest to a dying friend.

Gracious Heaven! why this disparity between our wishes and our powers? Why is the most generous wish to make others blest impotent and ineffectual—as the idle breeze that crosses the pathless desert? In my walks of life I have met with a few people to whom how gladly would I have said — "Go, be happy! I know that your hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above you—or worse still, in whose hands are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of your life. But there! ascend that rock, Independence, and look justly down on their littleness of soul. Make the worthless tremble under your indignation, and the foolish sink before your contempt; and largely impart that happiness to others which, I am certain, will give yourselves so much pleasure to bestow."

Why, dear Madam, must I wake from this delightful reverie, and find it all a dream? Why, amid my generous enthusiasm, must I find myself poor and powerless, incapable of wiping one tear from the eye of pity, or of adding one comfort to the friend I love! Out upon the world! say I, that its affairs are administered so ill! They talk of reform;—good Heaven! what a reform would I make among the sons, and even the daughters, of men!—Down, immediately, should go fools from the high places where misbegotten chance has perked them up, and through life should they skulk, ever haunted by their native insignificance, as the body marches accompanied by its shadow.—As for a much more formidable class, the knaves, I am at a loss what to do with them: Had I a world, there should not be a knave in it.

But the hand that could give I would liberally fill: and I would pour delight on the heart that could kindly forgive, and generously love.

Still the inequalities of life are, among men, comparatively tolerable—but there is a delicacy, a tenderness, accompanying every view in which we can place lovely Woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of Fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life: let there be slight degrees of precedency among them—but let them be ALL sacred.—Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable; it is an original component feature of my mind.

R. B.

No. CCXIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.*

Ellisland, 17th December, 1791.

MANY thanks, to you, Madam, for your good news respecting the little floweret and the mother-plant. I hope my poetic prayers have been heard, and will be answered up to the warmest sincerity of their fullest extent; and then Mrs. Henri will find her little darling the representative of his late parent, in every thing but his abridged existence.

I have just finished the following song which, to a lady the descendant of Wallace—and many heroes of his truly illustrious line—and herself

was made and accepted; but Delany's circumstances were urged as an obstacle; delays ensued; a coldness on the lover's part followed; his regiment was called abroad—he went with it; she heard from him once and no more, and was left to mourn the change of affection—to droop and die. He perished in battle or by a foreign climate, soon after the death of the young lady of whose love he was unworthy.

The following verses on this unfortunate attachment form part of a poem found among her papers at her death; she takes Delany's portrait from her bosom, presses it to her lips, and says,

'Next to thyself 'tis all on earth,
Thy Stella dear doth hold,
The glass is clouded with my breath,
And as my bosom cold:
That bosom which so oft has glowed
With love and friendship's name,
Where you the seed of love first sowed,
That kindled into flame.
'You there neglected let it burn,
It seized the vital part,
And left my bosom as an urn
To hold a broken heart;
I once had thought I should have been
A tender happy wife,
And past my future days serene
With thee, my James, through life.'

The information contained in this note was obligingly communicated by H. P. Davies, Esq., nephew of the lady.—CUNNINGHAM.]

* [To the friendship of this accomplished lady we owe many of the best of the poet's letters:—it was one of his remarks that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference—that in the former, though unpolished by fashion, and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation and much intelligence; but a refined and accomplished woman was a being almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea.—CROMEK.]

the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology.

"*Scene—A field of battle—time of the day, evening; the wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following*

SONG OF DEATH.

"Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the bright setting sun;
Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear, tender ties—
Our race of existence is run!"

[*See page* 414.]

The circumstance that gave rise to the foregoing verses was—looking over with a musical friend M'Donald's collection of Highland airs, I was struck with one, an Isle of Skye tune, entitled "Oran an Aoig, or, the Song of Death," to the measure of which I have adapted my stanzas. I have of late composed two or three other little pieces, which, ere yon full-orbed moon, whose broad impudent face now stares at old mother earth all night, shall have shrunk into a modest crescent, just peeping forth at dewy dawn, I shall find an hour to transcribe for you. *A Dieu je vous commende.*

R. B.

No. CCXV.

TO Mr. WILLIAM SMELLIE,*

PRINTER.

Dumfries, 22nd January, 1792.

I SIT down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first ranks of fashion, too. What a task! to you—who care no more for the herd of animals called young ladies than you do for the herd of animals called young gentlemen. To you—who despise and detest the groupings and combinations of fashion, as an idiot painter that seems industrious to place staring fools and unprincipled knaves in the foreground of his picture, while men of sense and honesty are too often thrown in the dimmest shades. Mrs. Riddel,† who will take this letter to town with her, and send it to you, is a character that, even in your own way, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would be an acquisition to your acquaintance. The lady, too, is a votary of the muses; and, as I think myself somewhat of a judge in my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct, and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the *lady-poetesses* of the day. She is a great admirer of your book; ‡ and, hearing me say that I was acquainted with you, she begged to be known to you, as she is just going to pay her first visit to our Caledonian capital. I told her that her best way was to desire her near relation, and your intimate friend, Craigdarroch, to have you at his house while she was there; and, lest you might think of a lively West Indian girl of eighteen, as girls of eighteen too often deserve to be thought of, I should take care to remove that prejudice. To be impartial, however, in appreciating the lady's merits, she has one unlucky failing: a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it; and a failing that you will easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself;—where she dislikes, or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it than where she esteems and respects.

I will not present you with the unmeaning *compliments of the season*, but I will send you my warmest wishes and most ardent prayers, that FORTUNE may never throw your SUBSISTENCE to the mercy of a KNAVE, nor set your CHARACTER on the judgment of a FOOL; but, that, upright and erect, you may walk to an honest grave, where men of letters shall say, "Here lies a man who did honour to science," and men of worth shall say, "Here lies a man who did honour to human nature."

R. B.

No. CCXVI.

TO Mr. PETER HILL,

BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

Dumfries, February 5th, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I SEND you by the bearer, (Mr. Clark, a particular friend of mine), six pounds and a shilling, which you will dispose of as follows:—Five pounds ten shillings, per account I owe Mr. R. Burn, architect, for erecting the stone over the grave of poor Fergusson. He was two years in erecting it, after I had commissioned him for it; and I have been two years in paying him, after he sent me his account; so

* [William Smellie was the son of a mason in Edinburgh, and served an apprenticeship to learn the art of printing with Hamilton and Balfour. The hours of remission from labour—too often squandered—were employed by Smellie in acquiring knowledge, and he attended some of the University classes with such success that he was enabled to put forth that edition of Terence which gained the prize offered by the Philosophical Society. He aided too in the composition of Buchan's Domestic Medicine; wrote the chief articles in the first edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, aided Gilbert Stuart in editing the Edinburgh Magazine and Review, which perished because of the satiric and acrimonious spirit of the said Gilbert, and translated Buffon's Natural History. But the work through which his name will likely be remembered, is the Philosophy of Natural History, the first volume of which was published in 1790. He died June 24th, 1795, leaving a name of no common eminence as a naturalist.]

† [Maria Woodleigh, by marriage Mrs. Riddel, resided at Woodleigh Park, near Dumfries. She is to be carefully distinguished from Mrs. Riddel, of Friar's Carse, another friend of the Poet.—CHAMBERS.]

‡ [The Philosophy of Natural History.]

he and I are quits. He had the *hardiesse* to ask me interest on the sum; but, considering that the money was due by one Poet for putting a tomb-stone over the grave of another, he may, with grateful surprise, thank Heaven that ever he saw a farthing of it.

With the remainder of the money pay yourself for the "Office of a Messenger," that I bought of you; and send me by Mr. Clark a note of its price. Send me, likewise, the fifth volume of the "Observer," by Mr. Clark; and if any money remain let it stand to account.

My best compliments to Mrs. Hill.

I sent you a maukin by last week's fly, which I hope you received.*

Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT BURNS.

No. CCXVII.

TO MR. W. NICOL.

20th February, 1792.

O THOU, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! How infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy supereminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude, thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, strait as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs, and master of maxims, that antipode of folly, and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willie Nicol! Amen! Amen! Yea, so be it!

For me! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing! From the cave of my ignorance, amid the fogs of my dulness, and pestilential fumes of my political heresies, I look up to thee, as doth a toad through the iron-barred lucerne of a pestiferous dungeon, to the cloudless glory of a summer sun! Sorely sighing in bitterness of soul, I say, when shall my name be the quotation of the wise, and my countenance be the delight of the godly, like the illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills?† As for him, his works are perfect: never did the pen of calumny blur the fair page of his reputation, nor the bolt of hatred fly at his dwelling.

Thou mirror of purity, when shall the elfine lamp of my glimmerous understanding, purged from sensual appetites and gross desires, shine like the constellation of thy intellectual powers! —As for thee, thy thoughts are pure, and thy lips are holy. Never did the unhallowed breath of the powers of darkness, and the pleasures of darkness, pollute the sacred flame of thy sky-descended and heaven-bound desires: never did the vapours of impurity stain the unclouded serene of thy cerulean imagination. O that like thine were the tenor of my life, like thine the tenor of my conversation!—then should no friend fear for my strength, no enemy rejoice in my weakness! Then should I lie down and rise up, and none to make me afraid.—May thy pity and thy prayer be exercised for, O thou lamp of wisdom and mirror of morality! thy devoted slave,‡

R. B.

No. CCXVIII.

TO FRANCIS GROSE, ESQ., F.S.A.§

Dumfries, 1792.

SIR,

I BELIEVE among all our Scots literati you have not met with Professor Dugald Stewart, who fills the moral philosophy chair in the University of Edinburgh. To say that he is a man of the first parts, and, what is more, a man of the first worth, to a gentleman of your general acquaintance, and who so much enjoys the luxury of unencumbered freedom and undisturbed privacy, is not perhaps recommendation enough:—but when I inform you that Mr. Stewart's principal characteristic is your favourite feature; *that* sterling independence of mind, which, though every man's right, so few men have the courage to claim, and fewer still the magnanimity to support:—When I tell you that, unseduced by splendour, and undisgusted by wretchedness, he appreciates the merits of the various actors in the great drama of life, merely as they perform their parts—in short, he is a man after your own heart, and I comply with his earnest request in letting you know that he wishes above all things to meet

* [The original of the above curious letter of the Poet was given to Mr. Cochrane by his old friend and school-fellow, David Constable; the eldest and talented son of the late Archibald Constable—the prince of Edinburgh Publishers. It was afterwards in the possession of the late Geo. H. King, Esq., of Glasgow, who died on the 17th of January, 1840.]

† [Mr. Nicol had purchased a small piece of ground called Laggan, on the Nith. There took place the Bacchanalian scene which called forth "Willie brew'd a peck o' Maut."]

‡ [This strain of irony was occasioned by a letter from Mr. Nicol, containing good advice. The poet seems to have been reading the love-letter written by the schoolmaster at the request of Mr. Thomas Pipes.—CUNNINGHAM.]

§ [Mr. Grose, in the introduction to his "Antiquities of Scotland," acknowledges his obligations to Burns in the following paragraph, some of the terms of which will scarcely fail to amuse the modern reader:—

"To my *ingenious* friend, Mr. Robert Burns, I have been seriously obligated; he was not only at the pains of making out what was most worthy of notice in Ayr-shire, the country honoured by his birth, but he also wrote, expressly for this work, the *pretty tale* annexed to Alloway Church."

This "pretty tale" being "Tam o'Shanter!"]

with you. His house, Catrine, is within less than a mile of Sorn Castle, which you proposed visiting; or, if you could transmit him the enclosed, he would with the greatest pleasure meet you any where in the neighbourhood. I write to Ayr-shire to inform Mr. Stewart that I have acquitted myself of my promise. Should your time and spirits permit your meeting with Mr. Stewart, 'tis well; if not, I hope you will forgive this liberty, and I have at least an opportunity of assuring you with what truth and respect,

I am, Sir,
Your great admirer,
and very humble servant,
R. B.

No. CCXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Dumfries, 1792.

Among the many witch stories I have heard, relating to Alloway kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail; in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in; a farmer or farmer's servant was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough-irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the kirk of Alloway, and, being rather on the anxious look out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil, and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach plainly showed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan; or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay, into, the very kirk. As luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c., for the business of the night.—It was in for a penny, in for a pound, with the honest ploughman: so without ceremony he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:

On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief,—he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bag-pipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, "Weel luppen, Maggy wi' the short sark!" and, recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tail-less condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene; but, as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer's evening, about the time that

nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the cheerful day, a shepherd boy belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Alloway Kirk had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women, who were busy pulling stems of the plant Ragwort. He observed that, as each person pulled a Ragwort, he or she got astride of it, and called out, "Up horsie!" on which the Ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his Ragwort, and cried with the rest, "Up horsie!" and, strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopt was a merchant's wine cellar in Bourdeaux, where, without saying By your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning, foe to the imps and works of darkness, threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep, and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the Merchant. Somebody, that understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said such-a-one's herd in Alloway, and, by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale.*

I am, &c.

R. B.

No. CCXX.

TO Mr. J. CLARKE,

EDINBURGH.

July 16, 1792.

Mr. Burns begs leave to present his most respectful compliments to Mr. Clarke.—Mr. B. some time ago did himself the honour of writing Mr. C. respecting coming out to the country, to give a little musical instruction in a highly respectable family,† where Mr. C. may have his own terms, and may be as happy as indolence, the devil, and the gout will permit him. Mr. B. knows well how Mr. C. is engaged with another family; but cannot Mr. C. find two or three weeks to spare to each of them? Mr. B. is deeply impressed with, and awfully conscious of, the high importance of Mr. C.'s time, whether in the winged moments of symphonious exhibition, at the keys of harmony, while listening seraphs cease their own less delightful strains; or in the drowsy arms of slumb'rous repose, in the arms of his dearly beloved elbow chair, where the frowsy, but potent power of indolence circumfuses her vapours round, and sheds her dews on the head of her darling son. But half a line conveying half a meaning from Mr. C. would make Mr. B. the happiest of mortals.

No. CCXXI.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Annan Water Foot, 22nd August, 1792.

Do not blame me for it, Madam—my own conscience, hackneyed and weather-beaten as it is, in watching and reproving my vagaries, follies, indolence, &c., has continued to punish me sufficiently.

* * * * * * *

Do you think it possible, my dear and honoured friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favours, to esteem for much worth, and to the honest, kind, pleasurable tie of now old acquaintance, and I hope and am sure of progressive, increasing friendship—as for a single day not to think of you—to ask the Fates what they are doing and about to do with my much loved friend and her wide scattered connexions, and to beg of them to be as kind to you and yours as they possibly can?

Apropos! (though how it is apropos, I have not leisure to explain) Do you know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours?—Almost! said I—I am in love, souse, over head and ears, deep as the unfathomable abyss of the boundless ocean; but the word Love, owing to the *intermingledoms* of the good and the bad, the pure and the impure in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment. Know, then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a Messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons

* [This letter was inserted in the "Censura Literaria."—It was communicated to Sir Egerton Brydges, the Editor of that work, by Mr. Gilchrist of Stamford, with the following remark.

"In a collection of miscellaneous papers of the Antiquary Grose, which I purchased a few years since, I found the accompanying letter written to him by Burns, when the former was collecting the Antiquities of Scotland. When I premise it was on the second tradition that he afterwards formed the inimitable tale of 'Tam o' Shanter,' I cannot doubt of its being read with great interest. It were 'burning daylight' to point out to a reader (and who is not a reader of Burns?) the thoughts he afterwards transplanted into the rythmical narrative."]

† [The family to whom this letter refers was that of M'Murdo, then of Drumlanrig, now of Dumfries. The remarks on the Poet's songs have already intimated with what success the musician exerted his talents, and how Burns aided him by composing lyrics in honour of the charms of the family.]

of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour, at M——. Mr. B. with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took my horse (though God knows I could ill spare the time), and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them, and, riding home, I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will cost you another groat of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with—

"My bonnie Lizzie Baillie
I'll rowe thee in my plaidie," &c.

So I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy, "unanointed, unanneal'd;" as Hamlet says.—

"O saw ye bonny Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther."

See page 446.

So much for ballads. I regret that you are gone to the east country, as I am to be in Ayrshire in about a fortnight. This world of ours, notwithstanding it has many good things in it, yet it has ever had this curse, that two or three people, who would be the happier the oftener they met together, are, almost without exception, always so placed as never to meet but once or twice a-year, which, considering the few years of a man's life, is a very great "evil under the sun," which I do not recollect that Solomon has mentioned in his catalogue of the miseries of man. I hope and believe that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, where the worthy of this life will renew their former intimacies, with this endearing addition, that, "we meet to part no more!"

* * * * * *

"Tell us, ye dead,
Will none of you in pity disclose the secret
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be!"

A thousand times have I made this apostrophe to the departed sons of men, but not one of them has ever thought fit to answer the question. "O that some courteous ghost would blab it out!" but it cannot be; you and I, my friend, must make the experiment by ourselves, and for ourselves. However, I am so convinced that an unshaken faith in the doctrines of religion is not only necessary, by making us better men, but also by making us happier men, that I should take every care that your little godson, and every little creature that shall call me father, shall be taught them.

So ends this heterogeneous letter, written at this wild place of the world, in the intervals of my labour of discharging a vessel of rum from Antigua.

R. B.

No. CCXXII.

TO Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

Dumfries, 10th September, 1792.

No! I will not attempt an apology.—Amid all my hurry of business, grinding the faces of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the Excise; making ballads, and then drinking, and then singing them; and, over and above all, the correcting the press-work of two different publications; still, still I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of my friends and fellow-creatures. I might have done, as I do at present, snatched an hour near "witching time of night," and scrawled a page or two. I might have congratulated my friend on his marriage; or I might have thanked the Caledonian archers for the honour they have done me (though to do myself justice, I intended to have done both in rhyme, else I had done both long ere now). Well, then, here is to your good health! for you must know I have set a nipperkin of toddy by me, just by way of spell, to keep away the meikle-horned deil, or any of his subaltern imps who may be on their nightly rounds.

But what shall I write to you?—"The voice said cry," and I said, "what shall I cry?"—O, thou spirit! whatever thou art, or wherever thou makest thyself visible! be thou a bogle by the eerie side of an auld thorn, in the dreary glen through which the herd-callan maun bicker in his gloamin route frae the faulde!—be thou a brownie, set, at dead of night, to thy task by the blazing ingle, or in the solitary barn, where the repercussions of thy iron flail half affright thyself, as thou performest the work of twenty of the sons of men, ere the cock-crowing summon thee to thy ample cog of substantial brose—be thou a kelpie, haunting the ford or ferry, in the starless night, mixing thy laughing yell with the howling of the storm and the roaring of the flood, as thou viewest the perils and miseries of man on the foundering horse, or in the tumbling boat!—or, lastly, be thou a ghost, paying thy nocturnal visits to the hoary ruins of decayed grandeur; or performing thy mystic rites in the shadow of the time-worn church, while the moon looks, without a cloud, on the silent, ghastly dwellings of the dead around thee; or taking thy stand by the bedside of the villain,

or the murderer, pourtraying on his dreaming fancy, pictures, dreadful as the horrors of unveiled hell, and terrible as the wrath of incensed Deity!—Come, thou spirit, but not in these horrid forms; come with the milder, gentle, easy inspirations, which thou breathest round the wig of a prating advocate, or the tête of a tea-sipping gossip, while their tongues run at the light-horse gallop of clish-ma-claver for ever and ever—come and assist a poor devil who is quite jaded in the attempt to share half an idea among half a hundred words; to fill up four quarto pages, while he has not got one single sentence of recollection, information, or remark, worth putting pen to paper for.

I feel, I feel the presence of supernatural assistance! circled in the embrace of my elbow-chair, my breast labours, like the bloated Sybil on her three-footed stool, and like her, too, labours with Nonsense.—Nonsense, auspicious name! Tutor, friend, and finger-post in the mystic mazes of law; the cadaverous paths of physic; and particularly in the sightless soarings of SCHOOL DIVINITY, who, leaving Common Sense confounded at his strength of pinion, Reason, delirious with eyeing his giddy flight; and Truth creeping back into the bottom of her well, cursing the hour that ever she offered her scorned alliance to the wizard power of Theologic Vision—raves abroad on all the winds. "On earth Discord! a gloomy Heaven above, opening her jealous gates to the nineteen thousandth part of the tithe of mankind! and below, an inescapable and inexorable hell, expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals!!!"—O doctrine! comfortable and healing to the weary, wounded soul of man! Ye sons and daughters of affliction, ye *pauvres miserables*, to whom day brings no pleasure, and night yields no rest, be comforted! "'Tis but *one* to nineteen hundred thousand that your situation will mend in this world;" so, alas, the experience of the poor and the needy too often affirms; and 'tis nineteen hundred thousand to *one*, by the dogmas of * * * * * *, that you will be damned eternally in the world to come!

But of all Nonsense, Religious Nonsense is the most nonsensical; so enough, and more than enough of it. Only, by the bye, will you, or can you, tell me, my dear Cunningham, why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalize the heart? They are orderly; they may be just; nay, I have known them merciful: but still your children of sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril-snuffing putrescence, and a foot-spurning filth, in short, with a conceited dignity that your titled * * * * * * or any other of your Scottish lordlings of seven centuries standing display, when they accidentally mix among the many-aproned sons of mechanical life. I remember, in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave.—How ignorant are plough-boys!—Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a * * *! —But hold—Here's t'ye again—this rum is generous Antigua, so a very unfit menstruum for scandal.

Apropos, how do you like, I mean *really* like, the married life? Ah, my friend! matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be! But marriage, we are told, is appointed by God, and I shall never quarrel with any of his institutions. I am a husband of older standing than you, and shall give you *my* ideas of the conjugal state (*en passant;* you know I am no Latinist, is not *conjugal* derived from *jugum*, a yoke?) Well then, the scale of good wifeship I divide into ten parts.—Goodnature, four; Good Sense, two; Wit, one; Personal Charms, viz., a sweet face, eloquent eyes, fine limbs, graceful carriage (I would add a fine waist too, but that is so soon spoilt, you know), all these, one; as for the other qualities belonging to, or attending on a wife, such as Fortune, Connexion, Education (I mean education extraordinary), Family blood, &c., divide the two remaining degrees among them as you please; only, remember that all these minor properties must be expressed by *fractions*, for there is not any one of them, in the aforesaid scale, entitled to the dignity of an *integer*.

As for the rest of my fancies and reveries—how I lately met with Miss Lesley Baillie, the most beautiful, elegant woman in the world—how I accompanied her and her father's family fifteen miles on their journey, out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God, in such an unequalled display of them—how, in galloping home at night, I made a ballad on her, of which these two stanzas make a part—

Thou, bonnie Lesley, art a queen,
Thy subjects we before thee;
Thou, bonnie Lesley, art divine,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The very Deil he could na scathe
Whatever wad belang thee!
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, 'I canna wrang thee.'

—behold all these things are written in the chronicles of my imagination, and shall be read by thee, my dear friend, and by thy beloved spouse, my other dear friend, at a more convenient season.

Now, to thee, and to thy before-designed *bosom*-companion, be given the precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things brought forth by the moon, and the benignest influences of the stars, and the living streams which flow from the fountains of life, and by the tree of life, for ever and ever! Amen!

R. B.

No. CCXXIII.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Dumfries, 24th September, 1792.

I HAVE this moment, my dear Madam, yours of the twenty-third. All your other kind reproaches, your news, &c., are out of my head when I read and think on Mrs. Henri's situation. Good God! a heart-wounded helpless young woman—in a strange, foreign land, and that land convulsed with every horror that can harrow the human feelings—sick—looking, longing for a comforter, but finding none—a mother's feelings, too:—but it is too much: he who wounded (He only can) may He heal!

* * * *

I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family. * * * *! I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a *cursed life!* As to a laird farming his own property; sowing his own corn in hope; and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness; knowing that none can say unto him, "What dost thou?"—fattening his herds; shearing his flocks; rejoicing at Christmas; and begetting sons and daughters, until he be the venerated, grey-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but Devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat.

Well, your kind wishes will be gratified, as to seeing me when I make my Ayr-shire visit. I cannot leave Mrs. B———, until her nine months' race is run, which may perhaps be in three or four weeks. She, too, seems determined to make me the patriarchal leader of a band. However, if Heaven will be so obliging as to let me have them in the proportion of three boys to one girl, I shall be so much the more pleased. I hope, if I am spared with them, to shew a set of boys that will do honour to my cares and name; but I am not equal to the task of rearing girls. Besides, I am too poor; a girl should always have a fortune. Apropos, your little godson is thriving charmingly, but is a very devil. He, though two years younger, has completely mastered his brother. Robert is indeed the mildest, gentlest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.

You know how readily we get into prattle upon a subject dear to our heart—you can excuse it. God bless you and yours!

R. B.

* [Mrs. Henri, daughter of Mrs. Dunlop, died at *Muges*, near *Aiguillon*, September 15th, 1792. The above letter is one of condolence on this melancholy event. See note to the "Stanzas on the birth of a Posthumous Child," page 249.]

No. CCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF MRS. HENRI, HER DAUGHTER.*

Dumfries, September, 1792.

I HAD been from home, and did not receive your letter until my return the other day.—What shall I say to comfort you, my much-valued, much-afflicted friend! I can but grieve with you; consolation I have none to offer, except that which religion holds out to the children of affliction—*children of affliction!*—how just the expression! and, like every other family, they have matters among them which they hear, see, and feel in a serious, all-important manner, of which the world has not, nor cares to have, any idea. The world looks indifferently on, makes the passing remark, and proceeds to the next novel occurrence.

Alas, Madam! who would wish for many years? What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery—like the gloom which blots out the stars one by one, from the face of night, and leaves us, without a ray of comfort, in the howling waste!

I am interrupted, and must leave off. You shall soon hear from me again.

R. B.

No. CCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Dumfries, 6th December, 1792.

I SHALL be in Ayr-shire, I think, next week; and, if at all possible, I shall certainly, my much esteemed friend, have the pleasure of visiting at Dunlop-house.

Alas, Madam! how seldom do we meet in this world, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves on accessions of happiness! I have not passed half the ordinary term of an old man's life, and yet I scarcely look over the obituary of a newspaper that I do not see some names that I have known, and which I and other acquaintances little thought to meet with there so soon. Every other instance of the mortality of our kind makes us cast an anxious look into the dreadful abyss of uncertainty, and shudder with apprehension for our own fate.—But of how different an importance are the lives of different individuals! Nay, of what importance is one period of the same life, more than another! A few years ago, I could have

laid down in the dust, "careless of the voice of the morning;" and now not a few, and these most helpless individuals, would, on losing me and my exertions, lose both their "staff and shield." By the way, these helpless ones have lately got an addition; Mrs. B—— having given me a fine girl since I wrote you. There is a charming passage in Thomson's "Edward and Eleanora:"

"The valiant, *in himself*, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his *single* woes?" &c.

As I am got in the way of quotations, I shall give you another from the same piece, peculiarly, alas! too peculiarly apposite, my dear Madam, to your present frame of mind:

"Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
With his fair-weather virtue, that exults
Glad o'er the summer main? the tempest comes,
The rough winds rage aloud; when from the helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting—Heavens! if privileged from trial
How cheap a thing were virtue!"

I do not remember to have heard you mention Thomson's dramas. I pick up favourite quotations, and store them in my mind as ready armour, offensive or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent existence. Of these is one, a very favourite one, from his "Alfred:"

"Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life; to life itself,
With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose."

Probably I have quoted some of these to you formerly, as indeed, when I write from the heart, I am apt to be guilty of such repetitions. The compass of the heart, in the musical style of expression, is much more bounded than that of the imagination; so the notes of the former are extremely apt to run into one another; but in return for the paucity of its compass, its few notes are much more sweet. I must still give you another quotation, which I am almost sure I have given you before, but I cannot resist the temptation. The subject is religion—speaking of its importance to mankind, the author says,

"'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright."

I see you are in for double postage, so I shall e'en scribble out t'other sheet. We, in this country here, have many alarms of the reforming, or rather the republican, spirit of your part of the kingdom. Indeed, we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a placeman, you know; a very humble one indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much as to gag me. What my private sentiments are, you will find out without an interpreter.

* * * * *

I have taken up the subject, and the other day, for a pretty actress's benefit night, I wrote an address, which I will give on the other page, called "The Rights of Woman:"

"While Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things."

[*See page* 314.]

I shall have the honour of receiving your criticisms in person at Dunlop.

R. B.

No. CCXXVI.

TO R. GRAHAM, Esq.,

FINTRAY.*

December, 1792.

Sir:

I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr. Mitchel, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your Board† to enquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government.

Sir, you are a husband—and a father.—You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones, turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas, Sir! must I think that such, soon, will be my lot? and from the d-mned, dark insinuations of hellish groundless envy too! I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head; and I say that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached; you, Sir, have been much and generously my friend.—Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you.—Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence.—I would not for my single self, call on your humanity; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear

* [Graham, of Fintray, stood the Poet's friend in this hour of peril, and the Board of Excise had the *generosity* to permit him to continue to eat the "bitter bread" of his situation for the remainder of his life. Burns, in his letter to Erskine of Mar, enters fully into the history of this dark transaction.—Cunningham.]

† [The Commissioners of the Scottish Board of Excise were at this period, *George Brown*, *Thomas Wharton*, *James Stodart*, *Robert Graham*, of *Fintray*, and *John Grieve*, Esquires.]

that now swells in my eye—I could brave misfortune, I could face ruin; for at the worst, "Death's thousand doors stand open;" but, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve courage, and wither resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due: To these, Sir, permit me to appeal; by these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me, and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved.

R. B.

No. CCXXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Dumfries, 31st December, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,

A HURRY of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgements to the good family of Dunlop, and you in particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof, four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed.—Alas, my dearest friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! on my road to Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued; a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

Jan. 2, 1793.

I HAVE just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However, I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint.—You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned: it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard drinking gentlemen of this country, that do me the mischief—but even this, I have more than half given over.*

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least, I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine.—I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my supervisors. I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in every thing else, I shall shew the undisguised emotions of my soul. War I deprecate: misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. * * R. B.

No. CCXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.†

5th January, 1793.

YOU see my hurried life, Madam: I can only command starts of time; however, I am glad of one thing; since I finished the other sheet, the political blast that threatened my welfare is overblown. I have corresponded with Commissioner Graham, for the board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you that all is set to rights in that quarter.‡ Now

* ["The following extract," says Cromek, "from a letter addressed by Robert Bloomfield to the Earl of Buchan, contains so interesting an exhibition of the modesty inherent in real worth, and so philosophical, and at the same time so poetical an estimate of the different characters and destinies of Burns and its author, that I should esteem myself culpable were I to withhold it from the public view.

"'The illustrious soul that has left amongst us the name of Burns, has often been lowered down to a comparison with me; but the comparison exists more in circumstances than in essentials. That man stood up with the stamp of superior intellect on his brow; a visible greatness: and great and patriotic subjects would only have called into action the powers of his mind, which lay inactive while he played calmly and exquisitely the pastoral pipe.

"'The letters to which I have alluded in my preface to the 'Rural Tales' were friendly warnings, pointed with immediate reference to the fate of that extraordinary man. 'Remember Burns!' has been the watch-word of my friends. I do remember Burns; but I *am not* Burns! neither have I his fire to fan or to quench; nor his passions to control! Where then is my merit if I make a peaceful voyage on a smooth sea, and with no mutiny on board? To a lady (I have it from herself), who remonstrated with him on his danger from drink, and the pursuits of some of his associates, he replied, 'Madam, they would not thank me for my company, if I did not drink with them.—I *must* give them a slice of my constitution.' How much to be regretted that he did not give them thinner slices of his constitution, that it might have lasted longer!'"]

† [In Dr. Currie's edition this letter is dated January 1792, and appears in the place appropriate to that date. The present editor, entertaining no doubt that the real date is 1793, has transferred it from the former to the present place. What gives reason to believe the latter the true date is the allusion to the "political blast" that had threatened the poet's welfare.—CHAMBERS.

The Editor of the present edition agrees with Mr. Chambers.—J. C.]

‡ [The poet spoke mildly to Mrs. Dunlop concerning the conduct of the Excise in the affair of what he called his political delinquencies; he was not so bird-mouthed to Erskine of Mar: his letter to that gentleman will remain a monument to the eternal dishonour of the government of that day, and the Board of Commissioners.—CUNNINGHAM.]

as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to —— but, hold! I was praying most fervently in my last sheet, and I must not so soon fall a swearing in this.

Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbings! What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candour, benevolence, generosity, kindness,—in all the charities and all the virtues—between one class of human beings and another. For instance, the amiable circle I so lately mixed with in the hospitable hall of Dunlop, their generous hearts—their uncontaminated dignified minds—their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared—if such comparing were not downright sacrilege—with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him, and with a grin of satisfaction see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife, and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin!

Your cup, my dear Madam, arrived safe. I had two worthy fellows dining with me the other day, when I, with great formality, produced my whigmaleerie cup, and told them that it had been a family-piece among the descendants of William Wallace. This roused such an enthusiasm that they insisted on bumpering the punch round in it; and, by and bye, never did your great ancestor lay a *Suthron* more completely to rest than for a time did your cup my two friends. Apropos, this is the season of wishing. May God bless you, my dear friend, and bless me, the humblest and sincerest of your friends, by granting you yet many returns of the season! May all good things attend you and yours wherever they are scattered over the earth!

R. B.

No. CCXXIX.

TO Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

3d March, 1793.

Since I wrote to you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write farther. When I say that I had not time, that as usual means that the three demons, indolence, business, and ennui, have so completely shared my hours among them as not to leave me a five minutes' fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I dare say he thinks I have used him unkindly, and, I must own, with too much appearance of truth. Apropos, do you know the much admired old Highland air called "the Sutor's Dochter?" It is a first-rate favourite of mine, and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it to you, as it was sung with great applause in some fashionable circles by Major Robertson, of Lude, who was here with his corps.

* * * * * *

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend, which vexes me much.

I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one; and I want to cut my armorial bearing on it; will you be so obliging as inquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented arms for myself, so you know I shall be chief of the name; and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltier-wise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colours, a wood-lark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes; round the top of the crest, *Wood notes wild;* at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, *Better a wee bush than nae bield.** By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia, but a *Stock and Horn*, and a *Club*, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the *Gentle Shepherd*. By the bye, do you know Allan? He must be a man of very great genius—Why is he not more known?—Has he no patrons? or do "Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy" on him? I once, and but once, got a glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world; and dear as it was, I mean, dear as to my pocket, I would have bought it; but I was told that it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the *only* artist who has his *genuine* pastoral *costume*. What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and harden the heart so? I think that, were I as rich as the sun, I should be as generous as the day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than any other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-lime quality to the possessor, at which the man, in his native poverty, would have revolted. What has led me to

* [The seal with the arms which the ingenious poet invented was carefully cut in Edinburgh and used by him the remainder of his life. It is still in the family, and regarded as a relique.]

this is the idea of such merit as Mr. Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob or government contractor possesses, and why they do not form a mutual league. Let wealth shelter and cherish unprotected merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay it.*

R. B.

No. CCXXX.

TO Miss BENSON,

NOW MRS. BASIL MONTAGU.

Dumfries, 21st March, 1793.

MADAM,

AMONG many things for which I envy those hale, long-lived old fellows before the flood, is this in particular, that, when they met with any body after their own heart, they had a charming long prospect of many, many happy meetings with them in after-life.

Now, in this short, stormy, winter day of our fleeting existence, when you now and then, in the chapter of accidents, meet an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you that you shall never meet with that valued character more. On the other hand, brief as this miserable being is, it is none of the least of the miseries belonging to it, that if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill-run of the chances shall be so against you that, in the overtakings, turnings, and jostlings of life, pop, at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and will not allow your indignation or contempt a moment's repose. As I am a sturdy believer in the powers of darkness, I take these to be the doings of that old author of mischief, the devil. It is well-known that he has some kind of short-hand way of taking down our thoughts, and I make no doubt that he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments respecting Miss Benson: how much I admired her abilities and valued her worth, and how very fortunate I thought myself in her acquaintance. For this last reason, my dear Madam, I must entertain no hopes of the very great pleasure of meeting with you again.

Miss Hamilton tells me that she is sending a packet to you, and I beg leave to send you the enclosed sonnet, though, to tell you the real truth, the sonnet is a mere pretence, that I may have the opportunity of declaring with how much respectful esteem I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.

No. CCXXXI.

TO PATRICK MILLER, Esq.

OF DALSWINTON.

Dumfries, April, 1793.

SIR,

MY poems having just come out in another edition—will you do me the honour to accept of a copy? A mark of my gratitude to you, as a gentleman to whose goodness I have been much indebted; of my respect for you, as a patriot who, in a venal, sliding age, stands forth the champion of the liberties of my country; and of my veneration for you, as a man whose benevolence of heart does honour to human nature.

There *was* a time,† Sir, when I was your dependant: this language *then* would have been like the vile incense of flattery—I could not have used it.—Now that connexion is at an end, do me the honour to accept of this *honest* tribute of respect from, Sir,

Your much indebted humble servant,

R. B.

* [That Burns admired such a painter as Allan was to be expected: they both wrought on nature of Scottish growth, and both excelled in pictures of humour and glee. As an artist, however, Allan's merits are of a limited nature; he neither excelled in fine drawing nor in harmonious colouring, and grace and grandeur were beyond his reach. He painted portraits, which are chiefly remarkable for a strong homely resemblance: he painted landscapes, but these want light and air, and he attempted the historical, but, save in one picture, "The Corinthian Maid," all his efforts in that way were failures. His genius lay in expression, especially in grave humour and open drollery. Yet it would be difficult perhaps to name one of his pictures where nature is not overcharged: he could not stop his hand till he had driven his subject into the debateable land that lies between truth and caricature. He is among painters what Allan Ramsay is among poets, a fellow of infinite humour, and excelling in all manner of rustic drollery, but deficient in fine sensibility of conception, and little acquainted with lofty emotion or high imagination.

Allan was born at Alloa, in Stirling-shire; studied in Glasgow and at Rome; returned to his native land, became Master of the Edinburgh Academy, and died there 6th August, 1796, in the fifty-third year of his age. In person he was under the middle size, his form slender, his face coarse and long, and his hair of the colour of sand. His looks were mean and unpromising, till he was in company to his liking, when his large grey eyes grew bright and penetrating, his manners pleasing, and his conversation sprightly and humourous, inclining to satire, and replete with observation and anecdote.—CUNNINGHAM.

At his death, he left a series of drawings illustrative of Burns's Works.]

† [The time to which Burns alludes was when he held the farm of Ellisland as tenant to Mr. Miller. Between the laird and the farmer there passed no stern words respecting the relinquishing of the lease—but it occasioned a coldness which continued till the death of the latter. At the burial of the Bard, the eyes of Miller were wet when many around were dry.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. CCXXXII.

TO JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, Esq., OF MAR.*

Dumfries, 13th April, 1793.

SIR:

DEGENERATE as human nature is said to be—and, in many instances, worthless and unprincipled it is—still there are bright examples to the contrary: examples that, even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of Man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronise and befriend a distant obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismission from the Excise; I am still in the service.—Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintray—a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend—I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. —Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismission; but the little money I gained by my publication is almost every guinea embarked, to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate, of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea:—That a CONSTITUTION, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be in every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory:—That, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of REFORM. But that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious CONSTITUTION; and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended.—Some such sentiments as these, I stated in a letter to my generous patron Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—"that my business was to act, *not to think;* and that, whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be *silent* and *obedient.*"

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my COUNTRYMEN has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the POET I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the MAN. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family, have pointed out as the eligible, and, situated as I was, the only eligible, line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of those *degrading* epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasted anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity exulting in his hireling paragraphs—"BURNS, notwithstanding the *fanfaronade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. BURNS was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity: but —*I will* say it! the sterling of his honest worth no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind oppression might bend, but could not subdue.—Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my Country's welfare, than the richest dukedom in it? I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of SLAVES.—Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys,—the little independent BRITONS in whose veins runs my own blood?—No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

* [Mr. Erskine, of Mar, was at all times of his life a staunch Whig. He became Earl of Mar, in 1824, in consequence of the reversal of his grandfather's attainder. He died August 20th, 1825, aged eighty-four.]

Does any man tell me that my full efforts can be of no service; and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concern of a nation?

I can tell him that it is on such individuals as I that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support, and the eye of intelligence. The uninformed MOB may swell a nation's bulk; and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng may be its feathered ornament; but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect, yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a Court—these are a nation's strength!

I know not how to apologize for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you farther—When you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. BURNS, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here, in his native colours, drawn *as he is;* but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats get the least knowledge of the picture, *it would ruin the poor* BARD *for ever!*

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude with which I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your deeply indebted,

And ever devoted humble servant,

R. B.*

No. CCXXXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

April 26, 1793.

I AM d-mnably out of humour, my dear Ainslie, and that is the reason, why I take up the pen to *you:* 'tis the nearest way *(probatum est)*, to recover my spirits again.

I received your last, and was much entertained with it; but I will not at this time, nor at any other time, answer it.—Answer a letter! I never could answer a letter in my life!—I have written many a letter in return for letters I have received; but then—they were original matter—spurt away! zig, here; zag, there; as if the devil, that my grannie (an old woman indeed) often told me, rode on will-o'-wisp, or, in her more classic phrase, SPUNKIE, were looking over my elbow.—Happy thought that idea has engendered in my head! SPUNKIE—thou shalt henceforth be my symbol, signature, and tutelary genius! Like thee, hap-step-and-lowp, here-awa-there-awa, higglety-pigglety, pell-mell, hither-and-yont, ramstam, happy-go-lucky, up tails-a'-by-the-light-o'-the-moon — has been, is, and shall be, my progress through the mosses and moors of this vile, bleak, barren wilderness of a life of ours.

Come then, my guardian spirit! like thee, may I skip away, amusing myself by and at my own light: and if any opaque-souled lubber of mankind complain that my elfine, lambent, glimmerous wanderings have misled his stupid steps over precipices, or into bogs; let the thick-headed Blunderbuss recollect that he is not SPUNKIE:—that

> SPUNKIE'S wanderings could not copied be;
> Amid these perils none durst walk but he.—

* * * * *

I have no doubt but scholar-craft may be caught, as a Scotsman catches the itch,—by friction. How else can you account for it that born blockheads, by mere dint of *handling* books, grow so wise that even they themselves are equally convinced of and surprised at their own parts? I once carried this philosophy to that degree that in a knot of country folks who had a library amongst them, and who, to the honour of their good sense, made me factotum in the business; one of our members, a little, wise-looking, squat, upright, jabbering body of

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* [Erskine of Mar gave a copy of the poet's letter to Cromek, who published it in the "Reliques." It was rumoured that Burns was not only admonished by the Board of Excise, but actually dismissed from his situation; this induced Erskine to propose a subscription in his favour, which was refused by the bard with that elevation of sentiment which characterized his mind. It was well that the future Earl of Mar heard the report, since it drew from Burns this truly manly and well considered letter—it was all but the latest act of his life to write it down from his memory among his memoranda. The late Mr. Findlater, his superior officer in Dumfries at the time, eulogized the conduct of the Board of Excise: averred that the bard received only a gentle—a courteous admonition and was never for a moment in danger of being dismissed. Burns informed Graham that Mitchell had confounded him with the information that he had received orders to inquire into his political conduct, for he was blamed as a person disaffected to the government. In the present letter the poet farther says that, but for the interposition of Graham of Fintray, he would have been turned adrift with his helpless family to all the horrors of want; and moreover that he was documented by the Board, *that his business was to act, not to think*, and that, whatever might be men and measures, it was his duty to be silent and obedient.

Those who contradict the testimony of Burns should do it on better authority than their own assertion; the poet's word will weigh down any other man's, so long as he speaks from his own knowledge. Findlater argued; Burns stated facts. The poet is supported by the testimony of Robert Ainslie, to whom all his affairs were known; in a letter dated 3rd September, 1834, without being aware that his illustrious friend's assertions were impeached, he says, "You know that the poet was a 'friend of the people' during the days of political ferment in his time: a circumstance which impeded his advancement in the excise—he never rose higher than the 'nicked stick,' the badge and implement of a common gauger. The Commissioners of Excise, irritated at his opinions, wrote him a formal official letter, sealing with the large seal of office, informing him that a 'petty officer' had 'no business with politics.'" The proud heart of Burns did not like this humbling; after a few wrathful words in secret to one of his friends, he took a pencil and wrote these lines on the envelope:

> "In politics if you would mix,
> And low your station be,
> Keep this in mind—be deaf and blind,
> Let great folks hear and see."

CUNNINGHAM.]

a tailor, I advised him, instead of turning over the leaves, *to bind the book on his back.*—Johnnie took the hint; and, as our meetings were every fourth Saturday, and Pricklouse having a good Scots mile to walk in coming, and, of course, another in returning, Bodkin was sure to lay his hand on some heavy quarto, or ponderous folio, with, and under which, wrapt up in his grey plaid, he grew wise, as he grew weary, all the way home. He carried this so far that an old musty Hebrew Concordance, which we had in a present from a neighbouring priest, by mere dint of applying it, as doctors do a blistering plaster, between his shoulders, Stitch, in a dozen pilgrimages, acquired as much rational theology as the said priest had done by forty years' perusal of the pages.

Tell me, and tell me truly, what you think of this theory.*

Yours,
SPUNKIE.

No. CCXXXIV.

TO Miss KENNEDY,

EDINBURGH.

MADAM:

Permit me to present you with the enclosed song as a small, though grateful tribute, for the honour of your acquaintance. I have, in these verses, attempted some faint sketches of your portrait in the unembellished simple manner of descriptive TRUTH.—Flattery, I leave to your LOVERS, whose exaggerating fancies may make them imagine you still nearer perfection than you really are.

Poets, Madam, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of BEAUTY; as, if they are really POETS of nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate than most of the world. In the cheerful bloom of SPRING, or the pensive mildness of AUTUMN; the grandeur of SUMMER, or the hoary majesty of WINTER; the poet feels a charm unknown to the rest of his species. Even the sight of a fine flower, or the company of a fine woman—(by far the finest part of God's works below), have sensations for the poetic heart that the HERD of man are strangers to.—On this last account, Madam, I am, as in many other things, indebted to Mr. Hamilton's kindness in introducing me to you. Your lovers may view you with a wish, I look on you with pleasure; their hearts, in your presence, may glow with desire, mine rises with admiration.

That the arrows of misfortune, however they should, as incident to humanity, glance a slight wound, may never reach your *heart*—that the snares of villany may never beset you in the road of life—that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOUR to the dwelling of PEACE, is the sincere wish of him who has the honour to be, &c.

R. B.†

No. CCXXXV.

TO Miss CRAIK.‡

Dumfries, August, 1793.

MADAM:

SOME rather unlooked-for accidents have prevented my doing myself the honour of a

* [What a strange hipperty-skipperty letter this is to AINSLIE! that is to say, to AINSLIE as we know him now,—the author of "The Father's Gift," and many beautiful little religious works, fitted for youth of both sexes. Ainslie, since ever I knew him, and that has been considerably upwards of twenty years, has been much the same,—a downright honest, sleepy-headed, kind-hearted gentleman, and his good humour never failing him, not even in his sleep, with which he generally favours the company once or twice in an evening. But even then, there is a benevolence in his countenance that beams more intensely than when he is awake. I have seen him fall fast asleep in the blue parlour at Ambrose's, with North in the chair, and myself croupier. Honest Ainslie! That is a constitutional failing which he cannot help; for a man of kinder or better intentions never was born. He is now, alas! the only relic that I know of, of the real intimate acquaintances of Burns.—HOGG, 1837.

What havoc a few years have made among the friends and admirers of the Poet! Since the above note was penned, the kind-hearted shepherd of Ettrick—his able co-adjutor, Motherwell—and his friend Ainslie, have all paid the debt of nature. Hamilton of Mauchline, the eldest son of Gavin Hamilton—Mr. Alexander Findlater, and my old friend, George H. King, have also within these few months gone to that bourne "whence no traveller returns."—J. C.]

† [The Poet has been called the flatterer of woman, but there is, perhaps, little flattery in saying that a beauteous creature is beautiful. The song addressed to the young lady has not been named. Miss Kennedy claimed relationship with the Hamiltons of Mossgiel.—CUNNINGHAM.]

The above letter, which originally appeared in Cromek's Reliques, has been hitherto classed among those written in 1793, but from the following extract of an original letter to Gavin Hamilton, Esq., dated Edinburgh, March 8th, 1787, now published exclusively in the present Edition, a much earlier date is assigned to it.

"My two songs on Miss W. Alexander,* and Miss P. Kennedy† were tried yesterday by a jury of literati, and found defamatory libels against the fastidious powers of Poesy and Taste; and the Author forbid to print them under pain of forfeiture of character. I cannot help almost shedding a tear to the memory of two songs that had cost me some pains, and that I valued a good deal, but I must submit."—

Again in the same letter, he adds:—

"My poor unfortunate songs come again across my memory—D—n the pedant, frigid soul of Criticism for ever and ever!"

‡ [Miss Helen Craik, of Arbigland, had merit both as a poetess and novelist: her ballads may be compared with those of Macneil, and her novels, amid much graphic force, had a seasoning of the satiric, which rendered them acceptable to all who understood their allusions. She died some years ago at Allonby: she was much of an enthusiast, and lived estranged from her family for a long period of her life.

* [The Lass o' Ballochmyle. † The Banks of Doon.]

second visit to Arbigland, as I was so hospitably invited, and so positively meant to have done. However, I still hope to have that pleasure before the busy months of harvest begin.

I enclose you two of my late pieces, as some kind of return for the pleasure I have received in perusing a certain MS. volume of poems in the possession of Captain Riddel. To repay one with an *old song*, is a proverb, whose force, you, Madam, I know, will not allow. What is said of illustrious descent is, I believe, equally true of a talent for poetry, none ever despised it who had pretensions to it. The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not, among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets.—In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind; give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility,—which, between them, will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet. To you, Madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the councils of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet, where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisiacal bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun, rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures that we owe to the lovely Queen of the heart of Man!

R. B.

No. CCXXXVI.

TO LADY GLENCAIRN.*

My Lady:

The honour you have done your poor poet, in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the pleasure the enclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid amid the cheerless gloom and sinking despondency of diseased nerves and December weather. As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, Heaven is my witness with what sincerity I could use those old verses which please me more in their rude simplicity than the most elegant lines I ever saw:—

> If thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
> Skill part from my right hand.
>
> My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,
> If I do thee forget,
> Jerusalem, and thee above
> My chief joy do not set.—

When I am tempted to do anything improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable to your ladyship and family. Now and then, when I have the honour to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with any mortification from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires, or the luxurious insolence of upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronized by the Noble House of Glencairn; and at gala-times, such as New-year's day, a christening, or the Kirn-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner and filled up in honour of the occasion, I begin with,—*The Countess of Glencairn!* My good woman, with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries, *My Lord!* and so the toast goes on until I end with *Lady Harriet's little angel,*† whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

Miss Craik's father was one of the wisest gentlemen and most sensible improvers of property on the Scottish side of the Solway: his taste, too, in architecture, was of a pure kind; he lived to a good old age, and had the misfortune to witness with his own eyes the melancholy death of his only son. The heir of Arbigland, accompanied by some sixteen young men of the parish, set off one summer morning in his pleasure skiff, to pay a visit to the English shore; when more than halfway over the Solway, a whirlwind suddenly arose, seized the sails, whirled the skiff around, and down it went with all on board—though a vessel was near, not a soul was saved. The wretched father saw all this from a seat on the top of the house; after the skiff sank, he sat still for an hour, looking fixedly, it is said, on the sea. Arbigland is now the property of his grandson, Douglas Hamilton Craik, Esq. The situation on the Solway side is beautiful: the house is a model of proportion and elegant workmanship; the woods, which partly enclose it, are very lofty, and some of the firs of the spruce tribe are of enormous girth. Burns was a frequent visiter here; nor has the ancient hospitality of the house of Craik declined, nor its love of literature.—Cunningham.]

* [Widow of William, thirteenth Earl of Glencairn, and mother of the patron of Burns.]

† [Lady Harriet Don was the daughter of Lady Glencairn. Her child was the late accomplished Sir Alexander Don, of Newton Don, Bart., whose widow is married to Sir James Maxwell Wallace, the only surviving brother of Robert Wallace, of Kelly, Esq., M. P. for Greenock. See note to Burns's Ode of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," p. 476.]

When I received your ladyship's letter, I was just in the act of transcribing for you some verses I have lately composed; and meant to have sent them my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with my late change of life. I mentioned to my lord my fears concerning my farm. Those fears were indeed too true; it is a bargain would have ruined me, but for the lucky circumstance of my having an Excise commission.

People may talk as they please of the ignominy of the Excise; fifty pounds a year will support my wife and children, and keep me independent of the world; and I would much rather have it said that my profession borrowed credit from me than that I borrowed credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business, is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, consequently assisting me vastly in my poetic pursuits. I had the most ardent enthusiasm for the muses when nobody knew me, but myself, and that ardour is by no means cooled now that my lord Glencairn's goodness has introduced me to all the world. Not that I am in haste for the press. I have no idea of publishing, else I certainly had consulted my noble generous patron; but after acting the part of an honest man, and supporting my family, my whole wishes and views are directed to poetic pursuits. I am aware that though I were to give performances to the world superior to my former works, still, if they were of the same kind with those, the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. I have turned my thoughts on the drama. I do not mean the stately buskin of the tragic muse.

* * * *

Does not your ladyship think that an Edinburgh theatre would be more amused with affectation, folly, and whim of true Scottish growth, than manners, which by far the greatest part of the audience can only know at second hand?

I have the honour to be,
Your ladyship's ever devoted
and grateful humble servant,
R. B.

No. CCXXXVII.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, Esq.

Dumfries, December, 1793.

Sir,

It is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man.—Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas; and now, I don't owe a shilling to man—nor woman either. But for these damned dirty, dog's-ear'd little pages,* I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under; the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman, of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money, too, was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scots songs I have for some years been making: I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you. A very few of them are my own. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr. Clint, of the King's Arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains.†

R. B.

No. CCXXXVIII.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, Esq.,

DRUMLANRIG.

Dumfries, 1793.

Will Mr. M'Murdo do me the favour to accept of these volumes; a trifling but sincere mark of the very high respect I bear for his worth as a man, his manners as a gentleman, and his kindness as a friend. However inferior, now, or afterwards, I may rank as a poet; one honest virtue to which few poets can pretend, I trust I shall ever claim as mine:—to no man, whatever his station in life, or his power to serve me, have I ever paid a compliment at the expense of truth.‡

The Author.

* [Scottish Bank Notes.]

† [The collection of songs mentioned in this letter are not unknown to the curious in such loose lore. They were printed by an obscure bookseller when death had secured him against the indignation of Burns. It was of such compositions that the Poet thus entreated the world—"The author begs whoever into whose hands they may fall, that they will do him the justice not to publish what he himself thought proper to suppress."]

‡ [These words are written on the blank leaf of the poet's works, published in two small volumes in 1793: the handwriting is bold and free—the pen seems to have been conscious that it was making a declaration of independence. —Cunningham.]

No. CCXXXIX.

TO CAPTAIN ———.*

Dumfries, 5th December, 1793.

SIR,

HEATED as I was with wine yesternight, I was perhaps rather seemingly impertinent in my anxious wish to be honoured with your acquaintance. You will forgive it: it was the impulse of heart-felt respect. "He is the father of the Scottish county reform, and is a man who does honour to the business at the same time that the business does honour to him," said my worthy friend Glenriddel to somebody by me who was talking of your coming to this country with your corps. "Then," I said, "I have a woman's longing to take him by the hand, and say to him, 'Sir, I honour you as a man to whom the interests of humanity are dear, and as a patriot to whom the rights of your country are sacred.'"

In times like these, Sir, when our commoners are barely able, by the glimmer of their own twilight understandings, to scrawl a frank, and when lords are what gentlemen would be ashamed to be, to whom shall a sinking country call for help? To the independent country gentleman. To him who has too deep a stake in his country not to be in earnest for her welfare; and who in the honest pride of man can view with equal contempt the insolence of office and the allurements of corruption.

I mentioned to you a Scots ode or song I had lately composed, and which I think has some merit. Allow me to enclose it. When I fall in with you at the theatre, I shall be glad to have your opinion of it. Accept of it, Sir, as a very humble, but most sincere, tribute of respect from a man who, dear as he prizes poetic fame, yet holds dearer an independent mind. I have the honour to be,†

R. B.

No. CCXL.

TO MRS. RIDDEL,‡

WHO WAS ABOUT TO BESPEAK A PLAY ONE EVENING AT THE DUMFRIES THEATRE.

I AM thinking to send my "Address" to some periodical publication, but it has not got your sanction, so pray look over it.

As to the Tuesday's play, let me beg of you, my dear Madam, to give us, "The Wonder, a Woman keeps a Secret!" to which please add, "The Spoilt Child"—you will highly oblige me by so doing.

Ah, what an enviable creature you are! There now, this cursed gloomy blue-devil day, you are going to a party of choice spirits—

> "To play the shapes
> Of frolic fancy, and incessant form
> Those rapid pictures, assembled train
> Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
> Where lively *wit* excites to gay surprise;
> Or folly-painting *humour*, grave himself,
> Calls laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve."

But as you rejoice with them that do rejoice, do also remember to weep with them that weep, and pity your melancholy friend,

R. B.

No. CCXLI.

TO A LADY,

IN FAVOUR OF A PLAYER'S BENEFIT.

MADAM, *Dumfries*, 1794.

YOU were so very good as to promise me to honour my friend with your presence on his benefit night. That night is fixed for Friday first: the play a most interesting one! "The Way to Keep Him." I have the pleasure to know Mr. G. well. His merit as an actor is generally acknowledged. He has genius and worth which would do honour to patronage: he is a poor and modest man; claims which from their very *silence* have the more forcible power on the generous heart. Alas, for pity! that from the indolence of those who have the good things of this life in their gift, too often does brazen-fronted importunity snatch that boon, the rightful due of retiring, humble want! Of all the qualities we assign to the Author and Director of Nature, by far the most enviable is —to be able "To wipe away all tears from all eyes." O what insignificant, sordid wretches are they, however chance may have loaded them with wealth, who go to their graves, to their magnificent *mausoleums*, with hardly the consciousness of having made one poor honest heart happy!

But I crave your pardon, Madam; I came to beg, not to preach.

R. B.

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* [Not unlikely Captain Robertson, of Lude.—CHAMBERS.]

† [This excellent letter originally appeared in Mr. Robert Chambers's interesting collection of Scottish songs. He obtained it from Mr. Stewart, of Dalguise, and employed it, as has already been done in this edition, to illustrate that glorious war ode,

"SCOTS WHA HAE WI' WALLACE BLED."]

‡ [This lady, to whom the bard has so happily and justly applied the above quotation, paid the debt of nature a few months ago. The graces of her person were only equalled by the singular endowments of her mind, and her poetical talents rendered her an interesting friend to Burns, in a part of the world where he was in a great measure excluded from the sweet intercourse of literary society. GILBERT BURNS, 1820.]

No. CCXLII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN,

WITH A COPY OF BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS AT BANNOCKBURN.

Dumfries, 12th January, 1794.

My Lord,

Will your lordship allow me to present you with the enclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for the acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honour me? Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with any thing in history which interests my feelings as a man equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able, usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly and indeed invaluable! for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

If my little ode has the honour of your lordship's approbation, it will gratify my highest ambition.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.

No. CCXLIII.

TO Mrs. RIDDEL.*

Dear Madam,

I meant to have called on you yesternight, but as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon, guarding the Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my weather-beaten rustic phiz a part of your box-furniture on Tuesday; when we may arrange the business of the visit.

Among the profusion of idle compliments, which insidious craft, or unmeaning folly, incessantly offer at your shrine—a shrine, how far exalted above such adoration—permit me, were it but for rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tribute of a warm heart and an independent mind; and to assure you, that I am, thou most amiable, and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem, and fervent regard, thine, &c. R. B.

No. CCXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

I will wait on you, my ever valued friend, but whether in the morning I am not sure. Sunday closes a period of our curst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! There is a species of the human genus that I call *the gin-horse class:* what enviable dogs they are! Round, and round, and round they go,—Mundell's ox, that drives his cotton mill, is their exact prototype—without an idea or wish beyond their circle; fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented; while here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d—d melange of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tenement, like a wild finch, caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold—"And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!" If my resentment is awaked, it is sure to be where it dare not squeak; and if— * * *

Pray that wisdom and bliss be more frequent visiters of R. B.

No. CCXLV.

TO THE SAME.

I have this moment got the song from Syme, and I am sorry to see that he has spoilt it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lend him any thing again.

I have sent you "Werter," truly happy to have any the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

'Tis true, Madam, I saw you once since I was at Woodlee; and that once froze the very life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such that a wretch meeting the eye of his judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him, could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak on it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can

* [The following five letters to Mrs. Riddel, and those marked 257-8, evidently relate to the Poet's quarrel with that lady; but, being without date, Dr. Currie has inextricably confused them. Probably No. 257 should be printed first, and the rest after an interval, as well as in a different arrangement.—Chambers.]

pay Mrs. R. a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly, than any man whom I have seen approach her.

R. B.

No. CCXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE often told you, my dear friend, that you had a spice of caprice in your composition, and you have as often disavowed it; even perhaps while your opinions were, at the moment, irrefragably proving it. Could *any thing* estrange me from a friend such as you?—No! To-morrow I shall have the honour of waiting on you.

Farewell, thou first of friends, and most accomplished of women; even with all thy little caprices!* R. B.

No. CCXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

MADAM,

I RETURN your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms, but, as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that "offences come only from the heart," before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you, as the most accomplished of women, and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, *now* to find cold neglect, and contemptuous scorn—is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is, however, some kind of miserable good luck, that while *de haut-en-bas* rigour may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a tendency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their poignancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities; the most sincere esteem, and ardent regard for your gentle heart and amiable manners; and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss, I have the honour to be, Madam, your most devoted humble servant, R. B.†

No. CCXLVIII.

TO JOHN SYME, Esq.‡

YOU know that, among other high dignities, you have the honour to be my supreme court of critical judicature, from which there is no appeal. I enclose you a song which I composed since I saw you, and I am going to give you the history of it. Do you know that among much that I admire in the characters and manners of those great folks whom I have now the honour to call my acquaintances, the Oswald family, there is nothing charms me more than Mr. Oswald's unconcealable attachment to that incomparable woman. Did you ever, my dear Syme, meet with a man who owed more to the Divine Giver of all good things than Mr. O.? A fine fortune; a pleasing exterior; self-evident amiable dispositions, and an ingenuous upright mind, and that informed, too, much beyond the usual run of young fellows of his rank and fortune: and to all this, such a woman!—but of her I shall say nothing at all, in despair of saying any thing adequate: in my song, I have endeavoured to do justice to what would be his feelings, on seeing, in the scene I have drawn, the habitation of his Lucy. As I am a good deal pleased with my performance, I in my first fervour thought of sending it to Mrs. Oswald, but on second thoughts, perhaps what I offer as the honest incense of genuine respect might, from the well-known character of poverty and poetry, be construed into some modification or other of that servility which my soul abhors.§ R. B.

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* [Beauty is sometimes a little whimsical, and it is said that Mrs. Riddel gave the bard the full benefit of the "caprice" which he persists in saying was a part of her composition. She was no less sensible of his imperfections, but then she did not shut her eyes as many did on his high qualities, and chronicle nothing in her memory but that he was always

"Craz'd wi' love or daiz'd wi' drink."

CUNNINGHAM.]

† [The offended lady, soothed by this submissive letter, re-admitted the bard to her friendship. He found her, in the words of another minstrel,

"Forgiving all and good."

The language in which Burns commonly indulged, even in mixed companies, was racy and vigorous, scaring minds of small calibre, and giving occasion to the sensitive and the delicate to lament that he had not got his masculine intrepidity of speech tamed down by education and polished company.—CUNNINGHAM.]

‡ [This gentleman held the office of distributor of stamps at Dumfries. Burns, who at first lived in the floor above his office, formed an intimacy with him, which lasted till the death of the poet. Mr. Syme was an agreeable table companion, and possessed considerable wit, the effusions of which were sometimes mistaken for Burns's. He died at his house of Ryedale, near Dumfries, November 24, 1831, in his seventy-seventh year.]

§ [The song enclosed was that fine one beginning,

'O wat ye wha's in yon town,'

composed on Mrs. Oswald, of Auchencruive.—See page 424.

The oral communications of the poet with his friend John Syme were numerous; not so his communications with the pen: they were for some years near neighbours, and intercourse by letter was unnecessary. In one of Cunningham's letters he says to Burns, "I lately received a letter from our friend Barncallie—what a charming fellow lost to society—born to great expectations—with superior abilities, a pure heart and untainted morals; his fate in life has been hard in-

No. CCXLIX.

TO Miss ——.

Dumfries, 1794.

MADAM,

NOTHING short of a kind of absolute necessity could have made me trouble you with this letter. Except my ardent and just esteem for your sense, taste, and worth, every sentiment arising in my breast, as I put pen to paper to you, is painful. The scenes I have passed with the friend of my soul and his amiable connexions! the wrench at my heart to think that he is gone, for ever gone from me, never more to meet in the wanderings of a weary world! and the cutting reflection of all, that I had most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the confidence of that soul of worth, ere it took its flight!

These, Madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish.—However, you also may be offended with some *imputed* improprieties of mine; sensibility you know I possess, and sincerity none will deny me.

To oppose these prejudices, which have been raised against me, is not the business of this letter. Indeed it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate, and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice, or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly?

I have a favour to request of you, Madam; and of your sister, Mrs. ——, through your means. You know that, at the wish of my late friend, I made a collection of all my trifles in verse which I had ever written. They are many of them local, some of them puerile and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake—a fame that I trust may live when the hate of those who "watch for my halting," and the contumelious sneer of those whom accident has made my superiors, will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion—I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts—Will Mrs. —— have the goodness to destroy them, or return them to me? As a pledge of friendship they were bestowed; and that circumstance indeed was all their merit. Most unhappily for me, that merit they no longer possess; and I hope that Mrs. ——'s goodness, which I well know, and ever will revere, will not refuse this favour to a man whom she once held in some degree of estimation.*

With the sincerest esteem, I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.

R. B.

No. CCL.

TO Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

26th February, 1794.

CANST thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tost on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, tremblingly alive as the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?

* * * *

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these cursed times—losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear—have so irritated me that my feelings at times could not be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments which, however the sceptic may deny them, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*—if I may be allowed the expression—which connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities—an all-powerful, and equally beneficent God; and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field: the

deed." It was the fate of Syme to lose the estate of Barncallie in Galloway, which passed from the family at his father's death. Of his talents something has already been said; he was one of the most agreeable men in company that ever did honour to a toast—he was celebrated too for his wit, his wine, and his dinners; some of his epigrams were imputed to Burns. His wife, a very handsome woman, was a most affectionate mother—her chief pleasure lay in seeing her children healthy and her husband happy.—CUNNINGHAM.]

* [Burns, on several occasions, recalled both his letters and verses when on reflection he thought he had been too communicative and confiding. It is to be regretted that rhymes overwarm, and letters too open and out-spoken, should have found their way to the world.]

last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.*

I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at the most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know any thing of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow, who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighting degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson—

> "These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
> Is full of thee;"—

and so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn. These are no ideal pleasures, they are real delights; and I ask, what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say equal, to them? And they have this precious, vast addition—that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God. R. B.

No. CCLI.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

May, 1794.

MY LORD:

WHEN you cast your eye on the name at the bottom of this letter, and on the title-page of the book I do myself the honour to send your lordship, a more pleasurable feeling than my vanity tells me that it must be a name not entirely unknown to you. The generous patronage of your late illustrious brother found me in the lowest obscurity: he introduced my rustic muse to the partiality of my country; and to him I owe all. My sense of his goodness, and the anguish of my soul at losing my truly noble protector and friend, I have endeavoured to express in a poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press; and in my gratitude to the dead, and my respect for the living (fame belies you, my lord, if you possess not the same dignity of man which was your noble brother's characteristic feature), I had destined a copy for the Earl of Glencairn. I learnt just now that you are in town:—allow me to present it you.

I know, my lord, such is the vile, venal contagion which pervades the world of letters, that professions of respect from an author, particularly from a poet, to a lord, are more than suspicious. I claim my by-past conduct, and my feelings at this moment, as exceptions to the too just conclusion. Exalted as are the honours of your lordship's name, and unnoted as is the obscurity of mine; with the uprightness of an honest man, I come before your lordship, with an offering, however humble—'tis all I have to give—of my grateful respect; and to beg of you, my lord,—'tis all I have to ask of you—that you will do me the honour to accept of it.†

I have the honour to be, R. B.

No. CCLII.

TO DAVID MACCULLOCH, ESQ.‡

MY DEAR SIR, *Dumfries, 21st June*, 1794.

MY long projected journey through your country is at last fixed: and on Wednesday next, if you have nothing of more importance to do, take a saunter down to Gatehouse about two or three o'clock, I shall be happy to take a draught of M'Kune's best with you. Collector Syme will be at Glens about that time, and will meet us about dish-of-tea hour. Syme goes also to Kerroughtree, and let me remind you of your kind promise to accompany me there; I will need all the friends I can muster, for I am indeed ill at ease whenever I approach your honourables and right honourables.

Yours, sincerely, R. B.§

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* [The religious enthusiasm of Burns was reasonable and practical; he was no believer in the efficacy of faith without works, and regarded all claims to devotion which were not founded on the charities of life with suspicion. That he had his moments of doubt and fear is true; he had too much knowledge to be presumptuous.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [The original of the above letter is in the possession of the Honourable Mrs. Holland, of Poynings. From a memorandum on the back, it appears to have been written in May, 1794.]

‡ [Now deceased. A sister of this gentleman became the wife of Mr. Thomas Scott, brother of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.]

§ [The endorsement on the back of the original letter shows what is felt about Burns in far distant lands.

"Given to me by David M'Culloch, Penang, 1801.
A. FRASER."

"Received 15th December, 1823, in Calcutta, from Captain Fraser's widow by me, Thomas Rankine."

"Transmitted to Archibald Hastie, Esq., London; March 27th, 1824, from Bombay."]

No. CCLIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Castle Douglas, 25th June, 1794.

HERE, in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may.—Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favourite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been so exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid that I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I passed along the road. The subject is Liberty: you know, my honoured friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it as an irregular ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms, I come to Scotland thus:

"Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, fam'd for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of Freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!
Beneath the hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds in silence sweep,
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep."

with the additions of

"That arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,
Brav'd usurpation's boldest daring!*
One quench'd in darkness, like the sinking star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age."

See Fragment on LIBERTY, page 317.

You will probably have another scrawl from me in a stage or two. R. B.

No. CCLIV.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Dumfries, 1794.*

YOU should have heard from me long ago; but over and above some vexatious share in the

* [The stature of Wallace is asserted by all his historians to have been remarkably large, and his strength extraordinary. Hollinshed says, he was "a young gentleman of so huge a stature and notable strength of body, with such skill and knowledge in warlike enterprises, and of such hardiness in attempting all manner of exploits, that his match was not any where lightly to be found." The *Minstrel* describes him thus:

Wallace statur off gretnes and of hycht,
Was jugyt thus, be discretion off rycht,
That saw him, baith in dissembil[1] *and weid;*[2]
Nyne quarters[3] *large he was, in length, indeid:*
Thryd part in schuldrys braid was he,
Rycht sembly, strong, and lusty, for to see:
Bowand[4] *bron haryt, on brow and breis lycht;*
Clear aspre[5] *eyne, like to the diamonds brycht;*
Under the chin, on the left side, was seyne
Be hurt a wain; his colour was sanguine;
Wounds he had, in many divers place;
But fair, and weill kepyt was his face.

There is an anecdote in confirmation of the uncommon strength ascribed to Wallace, related by *Hector Boeis*. It is curious, as it affords an example of longevity, not unsimilar to that of the Irish Countess of Desmond, who attained to a still more advanced age.

The date is 1430. At that time James I. was in Perth, and perhaps having heard *Henry* the *Minstrel* recite some of Wallace's exploits, he found his curiosity excited to visit a noble lady of great age, who was able to inform him of many ancient matters.

She lived in the Castle of Kinnoul, on the opposite side of the river, and was probably a widow of one of the Lords of Erskine, a branch of whose family continued to be denominated from the barony of Kinnoul, till about the year 1440.

"In consequence of her extreme old age, she had lost her sight; but all her other senses were entire, and her body was yet firm and lively. She had seen Sir William Wallace, and King Robert Bruce, and frequently told particulars concerning them.

"The king, who entertained a love and veneration for greatness, resolved to visit the old lady, that he might hear her describe the manners and strength of the two heroes, who were admired in his time, as they now are in ours. He therefore sent a message, acquainting her that he intended to visit her the next day.

"She received the message gratefully, and gave immediate orders to her handmaids to prepare every thing for his reception in the best manner; particularly that they should display her pieces of tapestry, some of which were uncommonly rich and beautiful.

"All her servants became busily employed, for their work was in some degree unusual, as she had not for a long time been accustomed to receive princely visiters.

"The next day, when told that the king was approaching, she went down into the hall of her Castle, dressed with as much elegance and finery as her old age, and the fashion of the time, would permit; attended by a train of matrons, many of whom were her own descendants; of which number, some appeared much more altered and disfigured by age than she herself was.

"One of her matrons having informed her that the king was entering the hall, she arose from her seat and advanced to meet him so easily and gracefully that he doubted of her being wholly blind. At his desire she embraced and kissed him.

"Her attendant assured him she was wholly blind, but that from long custom she had acquired these easy movements.

"He took her by the hand and sat down, desiring her to sit on the seat next to him. And then, in a long conference, he interrogated her about ancient matters.

"He was much delighted with her conversation: among other things, he asked her to tell him what sort of a man Sir William Wallace was. What was his personal figure? What his courage? and with what degree of strength he was endowed?—He put the same questions to her concerning King Robert Bruce.

"'Robert,' said she, 'was a man beautiful, and of a fine appearance. His strength was so great that he could easily have overcome any mortal man of his time. But in so far as he excelled other men, he was excelled by Wallace, both in stature and in bodily strength: for in wrestling Wallace could have overcome two such men as Robert was.'

"The king made some enquiries concerning his own immediate parents, and his other ancestors; and having heard her relate many things, he returned to Perth well pleased with the visit he had made."—BOETH. HIST. l. xvii.

This lady could not have been less than one hundred and thirty years old at the time mentioned. The Countess of Desmond alluded to was one hundred and forty at the period of her death. — ROBERTSON'S HISTORY OF RENFREWSHIRE.]

[1] Undress. [2] Dressed. [3] Six feet nine inches. [4] Curled. [5] Sharp.

pecuniary losses of these accursed times, I have all this winter been plagued with low spirits and blue devils, so that *I have almost hung my harp on the willow trees.*

I am just now busy correcting a new edition of my poems, and this, with my ordinary business, finds me in full employment.

I send you by my friend, Mr. Wallace, forty-one songs for your fifth volume; if we cannot finish in any other way, what would you think of Scots words to some beautiful Irish airs? In the mean time, at your leisure, give a copy of the Museum to my worthy friend, Mr. Peter Hill, Bookseller, to bind for me, interleaved with blank leaves, exactly as he did the Laird of Glenriddel's, that I may insert every anecdote I can learn, together with my own criticisms and remarks on the songs. A copy of this kind I shall leave with you, the editor, to publish at some after period, by way of making the Museum a book famous to the end of time, and you renowned for ever.*

I have got a Highland Dirk, for which I have great veneration; as it once was the dirk of *Lord Balmerino.* It fell into bad hands, who stripped it of the silver mounting, as well as the knife and fork. I have some thoughts of sending it to your care, to get it mounted anew.

Thank you for the copies of my Volunteer Ballad.—Our friend Clarke has done *indeed* well! 'tis chaste and beautiful. I have not met with any thing that has pleased me so much. You know I am no Connoisseur: but that I am an Amateur—will be allowed me.

R. B.

No. CCLV.

TO PETER MILLER, Jun., Esq.

OF DALSWINTON.

Dumfries, Nov. 1794.

Dear Sir:

Your offer is indeed truly generous, and most sincerely do I thank you for it; but, in my present situation, I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least, it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half-a-score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time, they are most welcome to my Ode; only, let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me.—Nay, if Mr. Perry, whose honour, after your character of him I cannot doubt; if he will give me an address and channel by which any thing will come safe from those spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him a bagatelle that I may write. In the present hurry of Europe, nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little prose essays, which I propose sending into the world through the medium of some newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to these Mr. Perry shall be welcome; and all my reward shall be his treating me with his paper, which, by the bye, to any body who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed. †

With the most grateful esteem, I am ever,

Dear Sir, R. B.

No. CCLVI.

TO Mr. SAMUEL CLARKE, Jun.

DUMFRIES.

Sunday Morning.

Dear Sir:

I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Capt. ——— made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble. Farther you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread lest last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way.—You,

* ["Burns's anxiety with regard to the correctness of his writings was very great. Being questioned as to his mode of composition, he replied, 'All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of *laborious correction.*'"—Cromek.]

† ["In a conversation with his friend Mr. Perry, (the proprietor of 'The Morning Chronicle,') Mr. Miller represented to that gentleman the insufficiency of Burns's salary to answer the imperious demands of a numerous family. In their sympathy for his misfortunes, and in their regret that his talents were nearly lost to the world of Letters, these gentlemen agreed on the plan of settling him in London. To accomplish this most desirable object, Mr. Perry, very spiritedly, made the Poet a handsome offer of an annual stipend for the exercise of his talents in his newspaper. Burns's reasons for refusing this offer are stated in the present letter."—Cromek.]

I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mr. Burns's welfare with the task of waiting, as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, shew him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause"—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. ———, should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done.

R. B.

No. CCLVII.

TO Mrs. RIDDEL.

SUPPOSES HIMSELF TO BE WRITING FROM THE DEAD TO THE LIVING.

MADAM: *Dumfries*, 1795.

I DARE say that this is the first epistle you ever received from this nether world. I write you from the regions of Hell, amid the horrors of the damned. The time and manner of my leaving your earth I do not exactly know, as I took my departure in the heat of a fever of intoxication, contracted at your too hospitable mansion; but, on my arrival here, I was fairly tried, and sentenced to endure the purgatorial tortures of this infernal confine for the space of ninety-nine years, eleven months, and twenty-nine days, and all on account of the impropriety of my conduct yesternight under your roof. Here am I, laid on a bed of pitiless furze, with my aching head reclined on a pillow of ever-piercing thorn, while an infernal tormentor, wrinkled, and old, and cruel, his name I think is *Recollection*, with a whip of scorpions, forbids peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish eternally awake. Still, Madam, if I could in any measure be reinstated in the good opinion of the fair circle whom my conduct last night so much injured, I think it would be an alleviation to my torments. For this reason I trouble you with this letter. To the men of the company I will make no apology.—Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt. But to you, Madam, I have to apologize. Your good opinion I valued as one of the greatest acquisitions I had made on earth, and I was truly a beast to forfeit it. There was a Miss I———, too, a woman of fine sense, gentle and unassuming manners—do make, on my part, a miserable d-mned wretch's best apology to her. A Mrs. G———, a charming woman, did me the honour to be prejudiced in my favour; this makes me hope that I have not outraged her beyond all forgiveness.—To all the other ladies please present my humblest contrition for my conduct, and my petition for their gracious pardon. O all ye powers of decency and decorum! whisper to them that my errors, though great, were involuntary—that an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts—that it was not in my nature to be brutal to any one—that to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible with me—but—

* * * *

Regret! Remorse! Shame! ye three hell-hounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels, spare me! spare me!

Forgive the offences, and pity the perdition of, Madam, your humble slave,

R. B.

No. CCLVIII.

TO Mrs. RIDDEL.

Mr. Burns's compliments to Mrs. Riddel—is much obliged to her for her polite attention in sending him the book. Owing to Mr. B. being at present acting as supervisor of excise, a department that occupies his every hour of the day, he has not that time to spare which is necessary for any belle-lettre pursuit; but, as he will, in a week or two, again return to his wonted leisure, he will then pay that attention to Mrs. R.'s beautiful song, "To thee, loved Nith"—which it so well deserves.* When "Anacharsis' Travels" come to hand, which Mrs. Riddel mentioned as her gift to the public library, Mr. B. will feel honoured by the indulgence of a perusal of them before presentation: it is a book he has never yet seen, and the regulations of the library allow too little leisure for deliberate reading.

Friday Evening.

P. S. Mr. Burns will be much obliged to Mrs. Riddel if she will favour him with a

* [In the song alluded to, there are some fine verses.

"And now your banks and bonnie braes
But waken sad remembrance' smart:
The very shades I held most dear
Now strike fresh anguish to my heart:
Deserted bower! where are they now?
Ah! where the garlands that I wove
With faithful care—each morn to deck
The altars of ungrateful love?
The flowers of spring how gay they bloom'd
When last with him I wandered here,
The flowers of spring are past away
For wintry horrors dark and drear.
Yon osier'd stream, by whose lone banks
My songs have lulled him oft to rest,
Is now in icy fetters lock'd—
Cold as my false love's frozen breast."]

perusal of any of her poetical pieces which he may not have seen.

Dumfries—1795.

No. CCLIX.

TO Miss FONTENELLE,

Dumfries, 1795.

Madam,

In such a bad world as our's, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures are positively our benefactors. To you, Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would ensure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would ensure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning or insidious compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the foregoing lines* be of any service to you in your approaching benefit night? If they will I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore: I know they have no great merit; but though they should add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.

No. CCLX.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

15*th December*, 1795.

My dear Friend,

As I am in a complete Decemberish humour, gloomy, sullen, stupid, as even the Deity of Dulness herself could wish, I shall not drawl out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathize in it: these four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child, has been so ill that every day, a week, or less, threatened to terminate her existence. There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay: and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate! even in all the vigour of manhood as I am—such things happen every day—Gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune.—A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject!

To leave talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad—

> "O that I had ne'er been married,
> I would never had nae care;
> Now I've gotten wife and bairns,
> They cry crowdie evermair.
>
> Crowdie ance; crowdie twice;
> Crowdie three times in a day;
> An ye crowdie ony mair,
> Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away."—
> * * * * * *

December, 24*th*.

We have had a brilliant theatre here this season; only, as all other business does, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country, *want of cash*. I mentioned our theatre merely to lug in an occasional Address which I wrote for the benefit-night of one of the actresses, and which is as follows—

ADDRESS,

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT-NIGHT, DEC. 4, 1795, AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES.

"Still anxious to secure your partial favour, &c."

(Vide p. 320.)

25*th*, *Christmas Morning*.

This, my much-loved friend, is a morning of wishes; accept mine—so heaven hear me as they are sincere!—that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not! In the charming words of my favourite author, "The Man of Feeling," "May the Great Spirit bear up the weight of thy grey hairs, and blunt the arrow that brings them rest!"

Now that I talk of authors, how do you like Cowper? Is not the "Task" a glorious poem?† The religion of the "Task," bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature; the religion that exalts, that

* [Vide "Address spoken by Miss Fontenelle," page 320.]

† [Burns generally carried Cowper's "Task" in his pocket, and took it out when he found himself in a lonely road, or in a brew-house where he had to wait sometimes to "gauge the browst." The copy which he used was one lent to him by Mrs. Dunlop; he enriched the margins with notes, critical and commendatory, and from the number of the marks and the frequency of the praise it appears that the English bard was a great favourite. This precious volume was after the death of the poet placed in the library at Dunlop; but the family carrying it with them one winter to Edinburgh, it was unfortunately destroyed by fire, along with other volumes which had been in the hands of Burns, and which attested equally his feelings and his taste.—Cunningham.]

ennobles man. Were not you to send me your "Zeluco," in return for mine? Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters; I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old musty papers, which, from time to time, I had parcelled by, as trash that were scarce worth preserving, and which yet at the same time I did not care to destroy; I discovered many of these rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out, in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you, except one, about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book.

R. B.

No. CCLXI.

TO Mr. ALEXANDER FINDLATER,*

SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

Sir,

Enclosed are the two schemes. I would not have troubled you with the collector's one, but for suspicion lest it be not right. Mr. Erskine promised me to make it right, if you will have the goodness to show him how. As I have no copy of the scheme for myself, and the alterations being very considerable from what it was formerly, I hope that I shall have access to this scheme I send you, when I come to face up my new books. *So much for schemes.* —And that no scheme to betray a FRIEND, or mislead a STRANGER; to seduce a YOUNG GIRL, or rob a HEN-ROOST; to subvert LIBERTY, or bribe an EXCISEMAN; to disturb the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, or annoy a GOSSIPING; to overthrow the credit of ORTHODOXY, or the authority of OLD SONGS; to oppose *your wishes*, or frustrate *my hopes*—MAY PROSPER—is the sincere wish and prayer of

R. B.

No. CCLXII.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.†

Dumfries, 1795.

Sir,

You will see by your subscribers' list that I have been about nine months of that number.

I am sorry to inform you that in that time seven or eight of your papers either have never been sent me, or else have never reached me. To be deprived of any one number of the first newspaper in Great Britain for information, ability, and independence, is what I can ill brook and bear; but to be deprived of that most admirable oration of the Marquis of Lansdowne, when he made the great, though ineffectual, attempt (in the language of the poet, I fear too true,) "to save a SINKING STATE"—this was a loss that I neither can nor will forgive you.—That paper, Sir, never reached me; but I demand it of you. I am a Briton; and must be interested in the cause of LIBERTY:—I am a MAN; and the RIGHTS of HUMAN NATURE cannot be indifferent to me. However, do not let me mislead you: I am not a man in that situation of life which, as your subscriber, can be of any consequence to you, in the eyes of those to whom SITUATION OF LIFE ALONE is the criterion of MAN.—I am but a plain tradesman, in this distant, obscure country town: but that humble domicile in which I shelter my wife and children is the Castellum of a Briton; and that scanty, hard-earned income which supports them is as truly my property as the most magnificent fortune of the most PUISSANT MEMBER of your HOUSE of NOBLES.

These, Sir, are my sentiments; and to them I subscribe my name: and, were I a man of ability and consequence enough to address the PUBLIC, with that name should they appear.‡

I am, &c.

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* [This gentleman died at Glasgow, on the 4th of December, 1839, at the advanced age of eighty-five.]

† [James Perry, editor and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, was one of the most intelligent and enterprising of British Journalists. He considered himself to be a sound old Whig, and by his satiric sallies and sharp scrutiny of public men and motives, was as a thistle and a thorn to the Tories for a full quarter of a century. He was one of the first in giving interest and importance to

"The folio of four pages,"

which it has maintained, and more than maintained, since. Perry was a native of Aberdeen: he was social and friendly, and held fast by his integrity during very trying and changeful times.—Cunningham.]

‡ ["This letter," says Cromek, "owes its origin to the following circumstance. A neighbour of the Poet, at Dumfries, called on him and complained that he had been greatly disappointed in the irregular delivery of the Paper of *The Morning Chronicle*. Burns asked, 'Why do not you write to the Editors of the Paper?' 'Good God, Sir, can *I* presume to write to the learned Editors of a Newspaper?'—'Well, if *you* are afraid of writing to the Editors of a Newspaper, *I* am not; and, if you think proper, I'll draw up a sketch of a letter which you may copy.'

Burns tore a leaf from his excise book, and instantly produced the sketch which I have transcribed, and which is here printed. The poor man thanked him, and took the letter home. However, that caution which the watchfulness of his enemies had taught him to exercise prompted him to the prudence of begging a friend to wait on the person for whom it was written, and request the favour to have it returned. This request was complied with, and the paper never appeared in print."—Cromek.]

No. CCLXIII.

TO COLONEL W. DUNBAR.*

I AM not gone to Elysium, most noble Colonel, but am still here in this sub-lunary world, serving my God by propagating his image, and honouring my king by begetting him loyal subjects. Many happy returns of the season await my friend! May the thorns of care never beset his path! May peace be an inmate of his bosom, and rapture a frequent visiter of his soul! May the blood-hounds of misfortune never trace his steps, nor the screech-owl of sorrow alarm his dwelling! May enjoyment tell thy hours, and pleasure number thy days, thou friend of the Bard! Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee!

R. B.

No. CCLXIV.

TO MR. HERON,

OF HERON.†

Dumfries, 1795.

SIR:

I ENCLOSE you some copies of a couple of political ballads; one of which, I believe, you have never seen.‡ Would to Heaven I could make you master of as many votes in the Stewartry—but—

> "Who does the utmost that he can
> Does well, acts nobly—angels could no more."

In order to bring my humble efforts to bear with more effect on the foe, I have privately printed a good many copies of both ballads, and have sent them among friends all about the country.

To pillory on Parnassus the rank reprobation of character, the utter dereliction of all principle, in a profligate junto which has not only outraged virtue, but violated common decency; which, spurning even hypocrisy as paltry iniquity below their daring;—to unmask their flagitiousness to the broadest day—to deliver such over to their merited fate—is surely not merely innocent, but laudable; is not only propriety, but virtue. You have already, as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the heads of your opponents; and I swear by the lyre of Thalia to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter, and fair, candid ridicule!

I am extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests in a letter which Mr. Syme shewed me. At present, my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at least for two or three years. The statement is this—I am on the supervisor's list, and, as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed *of course*. *Then*, a FRIEND might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty to two hundred a year; but the business is an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector's list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year, to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list; and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure, with a decent competency, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to, a political friend; at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus to hook my dependent situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, I shall petition your goodness with the same frankness as I now do myself the honour to subscribe myself,

R. B.§

No. CCLXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

IN LONDON.

Dumfries, 20th December, 1795.

I HAVE been prodigiously disappointed in this London journey of yours. In the first place, when your last to me reached Dumfries, I was in the country, and did not return until too late to answer your letter; in the next place, I thought you would certainly take this route; and now I know not what is become of you, or whether this may reach you at all.—God grant that this may find you and yours in

* [William Dunbar was one of the Edinburgh friends of the Poet; and Colonel of the Crochallan Fencibles—a Club of choice spirits, whose motto was wit and wine.]

† [He is sometimes styled "Heron of Kerroughtree," but properly as above.]

‡ [For these ballads, which related to Mr. Heron's contest for the representation of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright,—see pages 321-4.]

§ [Part of this letter was printed by Currie; the whole was published in the Reliques by Cromek. Patrick Heron died, as all his friends would desire to die—in bed, at peace with himself, and with mankind.]

prospering health and good spirits! Do let me hear from you the soonest possible.

As I hope to get a frank from my friend, Captain Miller, I shall every leisure hour take up the pen, and gossip away whatever comes first, prose or poetry, sermon or song.—In this last article I have abounded of late. I have often mentioned to you a superb publication of Scottish Songs, which is making its appearance in your great metropolis, and where I have the honour to preside over the Scottish verse, as no less a personage than Peter Pindar does over the English.

December 29th.

Since I began this letter, I have been appointed to act in the capacity of supervisor here, and I assure you, what with the load of business, and what with that business being new to me, I could scarcely have commanded ten minutes to have spoken to you, had you been in town, much less to have written you an epistle. This appointment is only temporary, and during the illness of the present incumbent; but I look forward to an early period when I shall be appointed in full form: a consummation devoutly to be wished! My political sins seem to be forgiven me.

This is the season (New-year's-day is now my date) of wishing; and mine are most fervently offered up for you! May life to you be a positive blessing while it lasts, for your own sake; and that it may yet be greatly prolonged is my wish for my own sake, and for the sake of the rest of your friends! What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but t'other day I was a young man; and already I begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast o'er my frame. With all my follies of youth, and, I fear, a few vices of manhood, still I congratulate myself on having had in early days religion strongly impressed on my mind. I have nothing to say to any one as to which sect he belongs to, or what creed he believes: but I look on the man who is firmly persuaded of infinite wisdom and goodness, superintending and directing every circumstance that can happen in his lot—I felicitate such a man as having a solid foundation for his mental enjoyment; a firm prop and sure stay in the hour of difficulty, trouble, and distress; and a never-failing anchor of hope, when he looks beyond the grave.

January 12th.

You will have seen our worthy and ingenious friend, the Doctor, long ere this. I hope he is well, and beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I dare say for the hundred and fiftieth time, his *View of Society and Manners;* and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original—it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of anybody but Dr. Moore.—By the bye, you have deprived me of *Zeluco;* remember that, when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of my laziness.

He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication.*

R. B.

* * * * *

No. CCLXVI.

Address of the Scotch Distillers to the Right Hon. William Pitt.

Sir,

While pursy burgesses crowd your gate, sweating under the weight of heavy addresses, permit us, the quondam distillers in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, to approach you, not with venal approbation, but with fraternal condolence; not as what you are just now, or for some time have been; but as what, in all probability, you will shortly be.—We shall have the merit of not deserting our friends in the day of their calamity, and you will have the satisfaction of perusing at least one honest address. You are well acquainted with the dissection of human nature; nor do you need the assistance of a fellow-creature's bosom to inform you that man is always a selfish, often a perfidious, being.—This assertion, however the hasty conclusions of superficial observation may doubt of it, or the raw inexperience of youth may deny it, those who make the fatal experiment we have done will feel.—You are a statesman, and consequently are not ignorant of the traffic of these corporation compliments.—The little great man who drives the borough to market, and the very great man who buys the borough in that market, they two do the whole business; and, you well know, they, likewise, have their price. With that sullen disdain which you can so well assume, rise, illustrious Sir, and spurn these hireling efforts of venal stupidity. At best they are the compliments of a man's friends on the morning of his execution: they take a decent farewell; resign you to your fate; and hurry away from your approaching hour.

If fame say true, and omens be not very much mistaken, you are about to make your exit from that world where the sun of gladness gilds the paths of prosperous men: permit us,

* [The novel entitled "Edward."]

great Sir, with the sympathy of fellow-feeling, to hail your passage to the realms of ruin.

Whether the sentiment proceed from the selfishness or cowardice of mankind is immaterial; but to point out to a child of misfortune those who are still more unhappy is to give him some degree of positive enjoyment. In this light, Sir, our downfall may be again useful to you:—Though not exactly in the same way, it is not perhaps the first time it has gratified your feelings. It is true, the triumph of your evil star is exceedingly despiteful.—At an age when others are the votaries of pleasure, or underlings in business, you had attained the highest wish of a British Statesman; and with the ordinary date of human life, what a prospect was before you! Deeply rooted in *Royal Favour*, you overshadowed the land. The birds of passage, which follow ministerial sunshine through every clime of political faith and manners, flocked to your branches; and the beasts of the field (the lordly possessors of hills and valleys), crowded under your shade. "But behold a watcher, a holy One, came down from heaven, and cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches!" A blow from an unthought-of quarter, one of those terrible accidents which peculiarly mark the hand of Omnipotence, overset your career, and laid all your fancied honours in the dust. But turn your eyes, Sir, to the tragic scenes of our fate.—An ancient nation that for many ages had gallantly maintained the unequal struggle for independence with her much more powerful neighbour, at last agrees to an union which should ever after make them one people. In consideration of certain circumstances, it was covenanted that the former should enjoy a stipulated alleviation in her share of the public burdens, particularly in that branch of the revenue called the Excise. This just privilege has of late given great umbrage to some interested, powerful individuals of the more potent part of the empire, and they have spared no wicked pains, under insidious pretexts, to subvert what they dared not openly to attack, from the dread which they yet entertained of the spirit of their ancient enemies.

In this conspiracy we fell; nor did we alone suffer—our country was deeply wounded. A number of (we will say) respectable individuals, largely engaged in trade, where we were not only useful, but absolutely necessary, to our country in her dearest interests; we, with all that was near and dear to us, were sacrificed without remorse, to the infernal deity of political expediency! We fell to gratify the wishes of dark envy, and the views of unprincipled ambition! Your foes, Sir, were avowed; were too brave to take an ungenerous advantage; *you* fell in the face of day.—On the contrary, our enemies, to complete our overthrow, contrived to make their guilt appear the villany of a nation.—Your downfall only drags with you your private friends and partisans: in our misery are more or less involved the most numerous and most valuable part of the community—all those who immediately depend on the cultivation of the soil, from the landlord of a province down to his lowest hind.

Allow us, Sir, yet farther, just to hint at another rich vein of comfort in the dreary regions of adversity;—the gratulations of an approving conscience. In a certain great assembly, of which you are a distinguished member, panegyrics on your private virtues have so often wounded your delicacy that we shall not distress you with any thing on the subject. There is, however, one part of your public conduct which our feelings will not permit us to pass in silence; our gratitude must trespass on your modesty; we mean, worthy Sir, your whole behaviour to the Scots Distillers.—In evil hours, when obtrusive recollection presses bitterly on the sense, let that, Sir, come like a healing angel, and speak the peace to your soul which the world can neither give nor take away.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your sympathizing fellow-sufferers,

And grateful humble Servants,

JOHN BARLEYCORN—Præses.*

* [This ironical Address was found among the Papers of the Poet. In evil hours, when obtrusive recollections pressed bitterly on the sense, perhaps the remembrance of having aided in crushing the great and glorious spirit of Burns came with no healing on its wings across the mind of Pitt. The success of Napoleon avenged the sufferings of the bard: nor has the memory of the late Lord Melville escaped without reproach. When the copyright of Burns's works was debated in the House of Lords, in 1812, Earl Grey dwelt upon the sinfulness of having neglected such a genius, and assigned to Lord Melville a greater share in starving him than some of his lordship's friends seemed to relish.—CUNNINGHAM.]

No. CCLXVII

TO THE

HON. THE PROVOST, BAILIES, AND TOWN COUNCIL OF DUMFRIES.

GENTLEMEN,

THE literary taste and liberal spirit of your good town has so ably filled the various departments of your schools as to make it a very great object for a parent to have his children educated in them. Still, to me, a stranger,

with my large family, and very stinted income, to give my young ones that education I wish, at the high school fees which a stranger pays, will bear hard upon me.

Some years ago your good town did me the honour of making me an honorary Burgess.—Will you allow me to request that this mark of distinction may extend so far as to put me on a footing of a real freeman of the town, in the schools?

If you are so very kind as to grant my request, it will certainly be a constant incentive to me to strain every nerve where I can officially serve you; and will, if possible, increase that grateful respect with which I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your devoted humble Servant,

R. B.*

No. CCLXVIII.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

Dumfries, 20th January, 1796.

I CANNOT express my gratitude to you for allowing me a longer perusal of "Anarcharsis." In fact, I never met with a book that bewitched me so much; and I, as a member of the library, must warmly feel the obligation you have laid us under. Indeed, to me, the obligation is stronger than to any other individual of our society; as "Anarcharsis" is an indispensable desideratum to a son of the muses.

The health you wished me in your morning's card, is, I think, flown from me for ever. I have not been able to leave my bed to-day till about an hour ago. These wickedly unlucky advertisements I lent (I did wrong) to a friend, and I am ill able to go in quest of him.

The muses have not quite forsaken me. The following detached stanzas I intend to interweave in some disastrous tale of a shepherd.

R. B.

No. CCLXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Dumfries, 31st January, 1796.

THESE many months you have been two packets in my debt—what sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend I am utterly at a loss to guess.† Alas! Madam, ill can I afford, at this time, to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too,‡ and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

"When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear, the untried night,
And shuts, for ever shuts! life's doubtful day."

R. B.

No. CCLXX.

TO MRS. RIDDEL,

WHO HAD DESIRED HIM TO GO TO THE BIRTH-DAY ASSEMBLY ON THAT DAY TO SHEW HIS LOYALTY.

Dumfries, 4th June, 1796.

I AM in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of shewing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting, like that of Balak to Balaam—"Come, curse me, Jacob; and come, defy me, Israel!" So say I—Come, curse me that east wind; and come, defy me the north! Would you have me in such circumstances copy you out a love-song?

I may perhaps see you on Saturday, but I will not be at the ball.—Why should I? "man delights not me, nor woman either!" Can you supply me with the song, "Let us all be unhappy together?"—do if you can, and oblige *le pauvre miserable*,§

R. B.

* [The Provost and Bailies complied at once with the humble request of the Poet; he was induced to make it through the persuasions of James Gray and Thomas White, Masters of the Grammar School of Dumfries. These were not ordinary men; the "Sabbath among the Mountains," and the "Cona," of the former, show much poetic feeling, while the mathematical discoveries of the latter give him a station among the followers of science. Gray, an accomplished scholar, ardent and enthusiastic, died in the East Indies; White, equally ardent and impetuous, remained at home. Their memories are still held in grateful remembrance on the Banks of Nith.—CUNNINGHAM.]

† [It seems all but certain that Mrs. Dunlop regarded the poet with some little displeasure during the evening of his days. His political sins and convivial delinquencies were likely the cause of this: it is however doubtful whether or not she knew of his sinking condition. That the bright career of Burns was so soon to terminate in the darkness of death seems never to have crossed the mind of friend or foe till he returned from the Brow a dying man.—CUNNINGHAM.]

‡ [The child died at Mauchline.]

§ [This is the last letter which Burns addressed to the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Riddel. In addition to the composition of a very admirable memoir of the poet, that lady bestirred herself much in rousing his friends both in Scotland and England to raise a monument at Dumfries to his memory. She subscribed largely herself: she induced others to do the same, and she corresponded with both Banks and Flaxman on the subject of designs. The following letters will suffice to show the reader that Mrs. Riddel had forgiven the bard for all his lampoons, and was earnest in doing his memory honour.

No. CCLXXI.

TO Mr. CLARKE,

SCHOOLMASTER, FORFAR.

Dumfries, 26th June, 1796.

My dear Clarke:

Still, still the victim of affliction! Were you to see the emaciated figure who now holds the pen to you, you would not know your old friend. Whether I shall ever get about again, is only known to Him, the Great Unknown, whose creature I am. Alas, Clarke! I begin to fear the worst. As to my individual self, I am tranquil, and would despise myself if I were not; but Burns's poor widow, and half-a-dozen of his dear little ones—helpless orphans!—there I am weak as a woman's tear. Enough of this! 'Tis half of my disease.

I duly received your last, enclosing the note. It came extremely in time, and I am much obliged by your punctuality. Again I must request you to do me the same kindness. Be so very good as, by return of post, to enclose me *another* note. I trust you can do it without inconvenience, and it will seriously oblige me. If I must go, I shall leave a few friends behind me, whom I shall regret while consciousness remains. I know I shall live in their remembrance. Adieu, dear Clarke. That I shall ever see you again is, I am afraid, highly improbable.* R. B.

"*Richmond, 20th May,* 1799.

"Sir,

"In answer to yours of the 10th of last month, I will trouble you with a few lines on the subject of the bard's monument, having corresponded with several persons (Dr. Currie, &c.) respecting it, whose judgment is very far preferable to mine, and we all agree that the first thing to be done is to collect what money *can* be got for that purpose, in which we will *all* do what service we can, as soon as the posthumous works are published; but those who are at all *saddled* with that business must get *it* off their hands before they commence *another* undertaking. Perhaps an application, or at any rate the *consulting* with Mr. Flaxman on the subject of the design, &c., might answer better from and with persons he is already acquainted with, and more heads than *one* should be called in counsel on the occasion. If, therefore, you or the other gentlemen concerned in this project think it proper, I will talk it over with Mr. Flaxman and some other artists, friends of his, whom I know, and Mr. F. can *then* let *you* know his ideas on the subject. The monument should be characteristic of him to whom it is raised, and the artist must somehow be made acquainted with him and *his works*, which it is possible he may not be at present. The inscription should be *first rate*. I think either Roscoe or Dr. Darwin would contribute their talents for the purpose, and it could not be given into better hands. I have no names to add to your list; but whenever *that* for the posthumous works is *closed*, I will set to work in earnest. Pray remember me to Mr. Syme when you see him, *from whom*, I know not *why*, I *never hear now*.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Maria Riddel."

No. CCLXXII.

TO Mr. JAMES JOHNSON.

EDINBURGH.

Dumfries, 4th July, 1796.

How are you, my dear friend, and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia.

* * * * * *

You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the poet to far more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit, or the pathos of sentiment! However, *hope* is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. —Your work is a great one; and now that it is finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended; yet

Of the merits of the designs it is difficult to judge without the drawings: Mrs. Riddel admired two, of which she gives the following description. "The first, which I think the handsomest, is a shrine enclosing a very beautiful female figure bending over a sort of sarcophagus, which is partly covered by drapery. This is really very elegant and classical, but it is expensive. The second design is a female figure, likewise very elegant, on a pedestal; with the addition of an attribute, either of these might be taken for Coila, whom Burns delighted to personify as his guardian genius." These designs were by Flaxman; they seem not to have pleased the friends of the poet in the vale of Nith; the intention of a monument was abandoned till a later day, when it was successfully revived by William Grierson, in Dumfries, and the late Alexander Key, Esq. in London. It would have been as well had the sculpture equalled the elegance of the architectural shrine which encloses it; that this is the opinion of others well qualified to judge, the following passage of a letter from one of our greatest living poets will abundantly show.

"Last summer I visited Staffa, Iona, and part of the Western Highlands, and returned through your town of Dumfries, having for the first time passed through Burns's country. It gave me much pleasure to see Kilmarnock, Mauchline, Mossgiel Farm, the Ayr, which we crossed where he winds his way most romantically through rocks and woods; and to have a sight of Irwin and Lugar, which naebody sung till he named them in immortal verse. The banks of the Nith I had seen before, and was glad to renew my acquaintance with them. By the bye, what a sorry piece of sculpture is Burns's monument in Dumfries churchyard—monstrous in conception and clumsy in execution! It is a disgrace to the memory of the poet."—Cunningham.]

* [The above affecting letter first appeared in Chambers' Edition of the Poet's Works, Edinburgh, 1839.]

I will venture to prophesy that to future ages your publication will be the text-book and standard of Scottish song and music.

I am ashamed to ask another favour of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present the "Scots Musical Museum." If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first *fly*, as I am anxious to have it soon.*

Yours ever, R. B.

No. CCLXXIII.

TO Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

Brow, Sea-bathing quarters, 7th July, 1796.

My dear Cunningham,

I received yours here this moment, and am indeed highly flattered with the approbation of the literary circle you mention; a literary circle inferior to none in the two kingdoms. Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more! For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bedfast, and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me.—Pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled!—but I can no more on the subject—only the medical folks tell me that my last and only chance is bathing and country quarters, and riding.—The deuce of the matter is this; when an Exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced to £35 instead of £50.—What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself, and keep a horse in country quarters—with a wife and five children at home, on £35? I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our Commissioners of Excise to grant me the full salary; I dare say you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poëte*—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger.†

I have sent you one of the songs; the other my memory does not serve me with, and I have no copy here; but I shall be at home soon, when I will send it you.—Apropos to being at home, Mrs. Burns threatens, in a week or two, to add one more to my paternal charge, which, if of the right gender, I intend shall be introduced to the world by the respectable designation of *Alexander Cunningham Burns*. My last was *James Glencairn*, so you can have no objection to the company of nobility. Farewell.

R. B.

No. CCLXXIV

TO Mr. GILBERT BURNS.

10th July, 1796.

Dear Brother,

It will be no very pleasing news to you to be told that I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better. An inveterate rheumatism has reduced me to such a state of debility, and my appetite is so totally gone, that I can scarcely stand on my legs. I have been a week at sea-bathing, and I will continue there, or in a friend's house in the country, all the summer. God keep my wife and children: if I am taken from their head, they will be poor indeed. I have contracted one or two serious debts, partly from my illness these many months, partly from too much thoughtlessness as to expense when I came to town, that will cut in too much on the little I leave them in your hands. Remember me to my mother.

Yours, R. B.

No. CCLXXV.

TO Mrs. BURNS.

Brow,‡Thursday.

My dearest Love:

I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow: porridge and milk are the only thing I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her, and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday.

Your affectionate husband,

R. B.

* ["In this humble and delicate manner did poor Burns ask for a copy of a work of which he was principally the founder, and to which he had contributed, *gratuitously*, not less than 184 *original, altered, and collected songs!* The editor has seen 180 transcribed by his own hand for the 'Museum.'"—Cromek.]

† [It is truly painful to mention—and with indignation we record it—that the poet's humble request of the continuance of his full salary was *not* granted! "The Commissioners," says Currie, "were guilty of no such weakness." To be merciful was no part of their duty.]

‡ [One evening during Burns's stay at the Brow, he was visited by two young ladies who lived in the neighbourhood and who sympathized in his sufferings. During their stay, the sun setting on the western hills, threw a strong light upon him through the window: a child perceived this, and proceeded to draw the curtain. "Let me look at the sun, my love," said the sinking poet; "it will be long before he will shine for me again!"

No. CCLXXVI.

TO Mrs. DUNLOP.

Brow, Saturday, 12th July, 1796.

MADAM:

I HAVE written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns.* Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!!!* R. B.

No. CCLXXVII.

TO Mr. JAMES BURNESS,

WRITER, MONTROSE.

Dumfries, 12th July.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

WHEN you offered me money assistance, little did I think I should want it so soon. A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O, James! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me! Alas! I am not used to beg! The worst of it is, my health was coming about finely; you know, and my physician assured me, that melancholy and low spirits are half my disease: guess, then, my horrors since this business began. If I had it settled, I would be, I think, quite well in a manner. How shall I use the language to you, O do not disappoint me! but strong necessity's curst command.

I have been thinking over and over my brother's affairs, and I fear I must cut him up;—but on this I will correspond at another time, particularly as I shall [require] your advice.

Forgive me for once more mentioning by return of post;—save me from the horrors of a jail!

My compliments to my friend James, and to all the rest. I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible, I dare not look it over again. Farewell.† R. B.

* ["Burns had, however, the pleasure," says Currie, "of receiving a satisfactory explanation of his friend's silence, and an assurance of the continuance of her friendship to his widow and children; an assurance that has been amply fulfilled. It is probable that the greater part of her letters to him were destroyed by our bard about the time that this last was written. He did not foresee that his own letters to her were to appear in print, nor conceive the disappointment that will be felt that a fewof this excellent lady's epistles have not served to enrich and adorn the collection. The above letter is supposed to be the last production of Robert Burns, who died on the 21st of the month, nine days afterwards."—CURRIE.

There are, however, others of a date still later.]

† [James Burness sent his cousin ten pounds the moment he received his letter, though he could ill spare the money, and concealed his kindness from the world, till, on reading the life and letters of the poet, he was constrained, in support of his own good name, to conceal it no longer. I was informed by my friend, Dr. Burness, that his grandfather, now in his eighty-fourth year, was touched by the dubious way in which I had left the subject in the poet's life, and felt that he was liable to the imputation of coldness of heart.—In a matter of such delicacy, I could not ask the family, and accordingly had left it as I found it, without comment or remark. The following letters will make all as clear as day, and right my venerable friend in a matter respecting which he cannot be but anxious:—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

TO Mr. BURNESS, MONTROSE.

"SIR:—

"AT the desire of Mrs. Burns, I have to acquaint you with the melancholy and much regretted event of your friend's death. He expired on the morning of the 21st, about five o'clock. The situation of the unfortunate Mrs. Burns and her charming boys, your feeling heart can easily paint. It is, however, much to her consolation that a few of his friends, particularly Mr. John Syme, collector of the stamps, and Dr. William Maxwell, both gentlemen of the first respectability and connections, have stepped forward with their assistance and advice; and I think there can be no doubt but that a very handsome provision will be raised for the widow and family. The former of these gentlemen has written to most of the Edinburgh professors with whom either he or Mr. Burns were acquainted, and to several other particular friends. You will easily excuse your not having sooner an answer to your very kind letter, with an acknowledgment of the contents, for, at the time it was received, Mr. Burns was totally unable either to write or dictate a letter, and Mrs. Burns wished to defer answering it till she saw what turn affairs took.

"I am, with much respect, your most obedient and very humble servant,

Dumfries, 23rd July, 1796. "JOHN LEWARS."

TO Mrs. ROBERT BURNS, DUMFRIES.

"MY DEAR COUSIN:—

"IT was with much concern I received the melancholy news of the death of your husband. Little did I expect, when I had the pleasure of seeing you and him, that a change so sudden would have happened.

"I sincerely sympathize with you in your affliction, and will be very ready to do any thing in my power to alleviate it.

"I am sensible that the education of his family was the object nearest to my cousin's heart, and I hope you will make it your study to follow up his wish by carefully attending to that object, so far as may be possible for you; or, if you think of parting with your son, Robert, and will allow me to take charge of him, I will endeavour to discharge towards him the duty of a father, and educate him with my own sons.

"I am happy to hear that something is to be done for you and the family; but as that may take some time to carry it into effect, I beg you will accept of the enclosed five pounds to supply your present necessities.

"My friend mentioned to me that any little thing he had was in the hands of his brother Gilbert, and that the payment of it, at present, would be hard upon him; I have therefore to entreat that, so far as your circumstances will permit, you will use lenity in settling with him.

No. CCLXXVIII.

TO JAMES GRACIE, Esq.

Brow, Wednesday Morning, 16th July, 1796.

My dear Sir,

It would [be] doing high injustice to this place not to acknowledge that my rheumatisms have derived great benefits from it already; but, alas! my loss of appetite still continues. I shall not need your kind offer *this week*, and I return to town the beginning of next week, it not being a tide week. I am detaining a man in a burning hurry. So, God bless you.*

R. B.

* [The admirers of Burns owe this letter to the kindness of Mr. Finlayson, merchant in Kirkcudbright. James Gracie, to whom it is addressed, was at that time a banker in Dumfries: he wrote, on being told that Burns longed to be home, that he would, if he pleased, bring him back in a post-chaise — a kind and delicate way of expressing his regard. It was now felt by all it seems, but a few, that the poet was not only dying, but dying in the deepest poverty.]

"I have farther to request that you will offer my best thanks to Mr. Lewars for his very friendly letter to me on this melancholy event, with my sincere wishes that such a warm heart as his may never want a friend.

"I shall be glad to hear of your welfare, and your resolution in regard to your son, and I remain, dear cousin, your affectionate friend,

"James Burness."

"*Montrose, 29th July*, 1796."

TO Mr. BURNESS, MONTROSE.

"Dear Sir:

"I was duly favoured with your letter of the 29th July.—Your goodness is such as to render it wholly out of my power to make any suitable acknowledgment, or to express what I feel for so much kindness.

"With regard to my son Robert, I cannot as yet determine; the gentlemen here (particularly Dr. Maxwell and Mr. Syme, who have so much interested themselves for me and the family) do not wish that I should come to any resolution as to parting with any of them, and I own my own feelings rather incline me to keep them with me. I think they will be a comfort to me, and my most agreeable companions; but should any of them ever leave me, you, Sir, would be, of all others, the gentleman under whose charge I should wish to see any of them, and I am perfectly sensible of your very obliging offer.

"Since Mr. Lewars wrote you, I have got a young son, who, as well as myself, is doing well.

"What you mention about my brother, Mr. Gilbert Burns, is what accords with my own opinion, and every respect shall be paid to your advice. I am, dear Sir, with the greatest respect and regard, your very much obliged friend,

"Jean Burns."

"*Dumfries, 3rd August*, 1796."

THE WIFE OF THE POET.

["I think Mrs. Burns had been pretty. In 1804 I was accustomed to sit in the seat next to her in the old church of Dumfries, and though always a brunette, she was then smartly dressed, had fine eyes, and looked very well. She had several wooers at that time, according to report. Some seven or eight years afterwards, I had a chance of a few weeks of intimate and daily acquaintance with her in Edinburgh, and scarcely ever met a woman, either high or low, who improved as much on acquaintance. She had a great deal of good sense and good nature."—Hogg.

The following more detailed account of this interesting woman appeared in the Dumfries Courier at the time of her death; and bears internal marks of being from the eloquent pen of Mr. M'Diarmid:—

"To the poet, Jean Armour bore a family of five sons and four daughters. The whole of the latter died in early life, and were interred in the cemetery of their maternal grandfather in Mauchline churchyard. Of the sons two died very young, viz., Francis Wallace and Maxwell Burns,—the last of whom was a posthumous child, born the very day his father was buried.[a] Of the said family of nine, three sons alone survive:—Robert, the eldest,[b] a retired officer of the Accomptant-General's Department, Stamp-office, London, now in Dumfries; and William and James Glencairn Burns, Captains in the Hon. the East India Company's Service.

"The term of Mrs. Burns' widowhood extended to thirty-eight years—in itself rather an unusual circumstance,—and, in July, 1796, when the bereavement occurred, she was but little beyond the age at which the majority of females marry. But she had too much respect for the memory of her husband, and regard for his children, to think of changing her name, although she might have done so more than once, with advantage; and was even careful to secure on lease, and repair and embellish, as soon as she could afford it, the decent though modest mansion in which he died. And here, for more than thirty years, she was visited by thousands on thousands of strangers, from the peer down to itinerant sonnetteers,—a class of persons to whom she never refused an audience, or dismissed unrewarded. Occasionally, during the summer months, she was a good deal annoyed; but she bore all in patience, and although naturally fond of quiet, seemed to consider her house as open to visitors, and its mistress, in some degree, the property of the public.[c] But the atten-

[a] [Shortly after her husband's death, Mrs. Burns had a very remarkable dream, which she sometimes spoke of to her more intimate female friends as a circumstance not only most vividly imprinted on the memory, but more prominently placed before the eye of the mind, than anything that ever occurred to her during her waking moments. And it was to this effect—that the poet, or rather his spirit, withdrew her curtains, and, after gazing wistfully and solemnly, said "that he had been permitted to take a last look of his widow and the child he had never before seen." The bare mention of such a circumstance may, to many, appear abundantly idle; and we of course merely allude to it as an impression rootedly entwined with our departed friend's memory, who was by no means a superstitious woman.]

[b] [Robert Burns, Jun., is the reputed author of the following song:—

Hae ye seen, in the calm dewy morning,
The red-breast wild warbling sae clear;
Or the low-dwelling, snow-breasted gowan,
Surcharg'd wi' mild e'ening's soft tear?
O, then ye hae seen my dear lassie,
The lassie I lo'e best of a';
But far frae the hame o' my lassie,
I'm monie a lang mile awa.

Her hair is the wing o' the blackbird,
Her eye is the eye o' the dove,
Her lips are the ripe blushing rose-bud,
Her bosom's the palace of love.
Tho' green be thy banks, O sweet Clutha!
Thy beauties ne'er charm me ava;
Forgive me, ye maids o' sweet Clutha!
My heart is wi' her that's awa.

O love, thou'rt a dear fleeting pleasure,
The sweetest we mortals here know;
But soon is thy heaven, bright beaming,
O'ercast with the darkness of wo.
As the moon, on the oft-changing ocean,
Delights the lone mariner's eye,
Till red rush the storms of the desert,
And dark billows tumble on high.]

[c] [The following little anecdote was some years ago told by Mrs. Burns, with great good humour, to a friend of ours, from whom we had it shortly after. A little ragged boy, selling ballads, called at a house near Mrs. Burns's dwelling in Dumfries, and inquired where Mrs. Burns lived. On her house being pointed out to him, "Ah," said he to the person who had given him the direction, "I would like to see her." "Well," was the reply, "go there and ask to sell your ballads, and you will see her." "But I dinna like," said he; "I think shame to gang there." Struck with the anxiety of the boy, and his diffidence, he was taken to Mrs. Burns's house, and put into the kitchen, where the servant began to

No. CCLXXIX.

TO JAMES ARMOUR,*

MASON, MAUCHLINE.

Dumfries, 18th July, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

Do, for heaven's sake, send Mrs. Armour here immediately. My wife is hourly expecting to be put to bed. Good God! what a situation for her to be in, poor girl, without a friend! I returned from sea-bathing quarters to-day, and my medical friends would almost persuade me that I am better, but I think and feel that my strength is so gone that the disorder will prove fatal to me.†

Your son-in-law,

R. B.

* [The father of Mrs. Burns.]

† [This is the last of all the compositions of the great poet of Scotland, being written only three days before his death. The original was long preserved in the family of the Armours of Mauchline, and was given into the keeping of Captain James Glencairn Burns on his most urgent entreaty. It is now in India, and may he who so worthily holds it be as fortunate as he is kind-hearted.—CUNNINGHAM. 1834.

This fervent wish has been accomplished. The Captain has now returned a Major, and has retired from the Hon. East India Company's Service with an independent fortune. J. C. 1840.]

tions of strangers neither turned her head, nor were ever alluded to in the spirit of boasting; and had it not been for a female friend who accompanied her on one occasion to the King's Arms Inn, to meet, by invitation, the Marchioness of Hastings, no one would have known that that excellent lady directed the present Marquis, who was then a boy, to present Mrs. Burns with a glass of wine, and at the same time remarked, that 'he should consider himself very highly honoured, and cherish the recollection of having met the poet's widow, as long as he lived.' Hers, in short, was one of those well-balanced minds that cling instinctively to propriety and a medium in all things; and such as knew the deceased, earliest and latest, were unconscious of any change in her demeanour and habits, excepting, perhaps, greater attention to dress, and more refinement of manner, insensibly acquired by frequent intercourse with families of the first respectability. In her tastes she was frugal, simple, and pure; and delighted in music, pictures, and flowers. In spring and summer it was impossible to pass her windows without being struck with the beauty of the floral treasures they contained; and if extravagant in any thing, it was in the article of roots and plants of the finest sorts. Fond of the society of young people, she mingled as long as able in their innocent pleasures, and cheerfully filled for them the cup 'which cheers but not inebriates.' Although neither a sentimentalist nor a 'blue stocking,' she was a clever woman, possessed of great shrewdness, discriminated character admirably, and frequently made very pithy remarks; and were this the proper place for such a detail, proofs of what is stated might easily be adduced.

"When young, she must have been a handsome, comely woman, if not indeed a beauty, when the poet saw her for the first time on a bleach-green at Mauchline, engaged, like Peggy and Jenny, at Habbie's Howe. Her limbs were cast in the finest mould; and, up to middle life, her jet-black eyes were clear and sparkling, her carriage easy, and her step light. The writer of the present sketch never saw Mrs. Burns dance, nor heard her sing; but he has learnt from others that she moved with great grace on the floor, and chaunted her 'wood-notes wild' in a style but rarely equalled by unprofessional singers. Her voice was a brilliant treble, and in singing 'Coolen,' 'I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen,' and other songs, she rose without effort as high as B natural. In ballad poetry her taste was good, and range of reading rather extensive. Her memory, too, was strong, and she could quote when she chose at considerable length, and with great aptitude. Of these powers the bard was so well aware that he read to her almost every piece he composed, and was not ashamed to own that he had profited by her judgment. In fact, none save relations, neighbours, and friends, could form a proper estimate of the character of Mrs. Burns. In the presence of strangers she was shy and silent, and required to be drawn out, or, as some would say, shown off to advantage, by persons who possessed her confidence, and knew her intimately.

"On Saturday, 22nd March, 1834, she was seized with paralysis for the fourth time during the last few years; and, although perfectly conscious of her situation, and the presence of friends, became deprived, before she could be removed to bed, of the faculty of speech, and, a day or two thereafter, of the sense of hearing. Still she lay wonderfully calm and composed, and, in the opinion of her medical attendant, suffered from weakness rather than from pain. Frequently she gazed with the greatest earnestness on her granddaughter, Sarah; and it was easy to read what was passing within, from the tears that filled her aged eyes, and trickled down her cheeks. To another individual she directed looks so eager and full of meaning as to impress him with the idea that she had some dying request to make, and deeply regretted that it was too late; for, even if her salvation had depended on the exertion, she was unfortunately incapacitated from uttering a syllable, guiding a pen, or even making an intelligible sign. The mind, in her case, survived the body; and this, perhaps, was the only painful circumstance attending her death-bed,—considering how admirable her conduct had always been, her general health so sound, her span protracted beyond the common lot, her character for prudence and piety so well established, and her situation in life every way so comfortable. On the night of Tuesday, or morning of Wednesday, a fifth shock, unperceived by the attendants, deprived Mrs. Burns of mental consciousness; and from that time till late in the evening, when she died, her situation was exactly that of a breathing corpse.—Thus passed away all that remained of 'bonny Jean,'—the relict of a man whose fame is as wide as the world itself, and the venerated heroine of many a lay which bid fair to live in the memories of the people of Scotland, and of thousands far removed from its shores, as long as the language in which they are written is spoken or understood. She was born at Mauchline in February, 1765, and had thus entered the seventieth year of her age.]

talk with him about buying some of his ballads. Mrs. Burns being informed of the circumstance, came into the kitchen, when, to the amusement of the good old lady, the following dialogue took place:—Mrs. B. "And so you wished to see Mrs. Burns?" Boy, (*anxiously,*) "O ay, I would like to see her." Mrs. B. "Well, you see her now—I am Mrs. Burns." Boy, (*looking utterly amazed,*) "Touts, you're jokin' me." Mrs. B. "Why do you think I am jokin' you?" Boy, (*with great simplicity,*) "Because Burns speaks about his bonny Jean!"]

END OF THE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

COMMON-PLACE BOOKS.

FIRST COMMON-PLACE BOOK,

BEGUN IN APRIL, 1783.

TO ROBERT RIDDEL, Esq.

My dear Sir:

In rummaging over some old papers, I lighted on a MS. of my early years, in which I had determined to write myself out; as I was placed by fortune among a class of men to whom my ideas would have been nonsense. I had meant that the book should have lain by me, in the fond hope that some time or other, even after I was no more, my thoughts would fall into the hands of somebody capable of appreciating their value. It sets off thus:—

"Observations,* Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry, &c., by Robert Burness;—a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good-will to every creature, rational and irrational.—As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished, rustic way of life; but as I believe they are really his own, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature to see how a ploughman thinks and feels under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the modes and manners of life, operate pretty much alike, I believe, on all the species."

"There are numbers in the world who do not want sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of their own abilities, to put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them the same importance which they do to those which appear in print."—Shenstone.

"Pleasing, when youth is long expired, to trace
The forms our pencil, or our pen, design'd!
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,
Such the soft image of our youthful mind."—*Ibid.*

April, 1783.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young inexperienced mind into; still I think it in a great measure deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.

August.

There is certainly some connexion between love, and music, and poetry; and, therefore, I have always thought it a fine touch of nature, that passage in a modern love-composition:

"As towards her cot he jogg'd along,
Her name was frequent in his song."

For my own part, I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity; unacquainted and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly; but I am always pleased with it, as it recals to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her. I not only had this opinion of her then—but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end.

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass, &c.†

REMORSE.

September.

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher, Mr. Smith, in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies or

* [Some of these "Observations" were published by Currie in the Poet's Correspondence; Cromek properly ventured to print the whole.—"It has been the chief object," he observes, "in making this collection (The Reliques), not to omit any thing which might illustrate the character and feelings of the Bard at different periods of his life. Robert Riddel, the gentleman to whom he communicated the "Observations," was one of those steady friends whom his genius obtained for him. For his eye he wrote those remarks on Scottish song, given elsewhere, [page 518] and, indeed, on all occasions shewed how much he loved his worth, his taste, and his learning.]

† [See "My handsome Nell," page 339.]

crimes have made us miserable and wretched, to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time to have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

March, 1784.

I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him;—though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called wicked. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped because he was out of the line of such temptation; and what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him with a brother's eye.

I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of blackguards, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who, by thoughtless prodigality or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin. Though disgraced by follies, nay, sometimes stained with guilt, I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty.

Shenstone finely observes, that love-verses, written without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was, at the time, genuine from the heart:—

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows, &c.*

* [See the song "My Nannie, O," page 347.]

March, 1784.

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broken by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following:—

O thou Great Being! what thou art, &c.†

April.

The following song is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but, as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.

My father was a farmer—upon the Carrick border, O, &c.‡

April.

I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand classes, which I shall call the *grave* and the *merry;* though, by-the-bye, these terms do not, with propriety enough, express my ideas. The grave I shall cast into the usual division of those who are goaded on by the love of money, and those whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The merry are the men of pleasure of all denominations; the jovial lads, who have too much fire and spirit to have any settled rule of action; but, without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses of nature: the thoughtless, the careless, the indolent—in particular *he* who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper, and a cheerful vacancy of thought, steals through life—generally, indeed, in poverty and obscurity; but poverty and obscurity are only evils to him who can sit gravely down, and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others; and lastly, to grace the quorum, such are, generally, those whose heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed with all the delicacy of feeling.

August.

The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men; but as I cannot please myself in the arrangement of my ideas, I must wait till farther experience and nicer observation throw more light on the subject.—In the mean time, I shall set down the following fragment, which, as it is the

† [See "Prayer under the pressure of violent Anguish," page 233.]

‡ [See page 341.]

genuine language of my heart, will enable any body to determine which of the classes I belong to:—

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O, &c.*

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that BEING to whom we owe life, with every enjoyment that renders life delightful; and to maintain an integritive conduct towards our fellow-creatures; that so, by forming piety and virtue into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the pious and the good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave, I do not see that the turn of mind, and pursuits of such an one as the above verses describe—one who spends the hours and thoughts which the vocations of the day can spare, with Ossian, Shakspeare, Thomson, Shenstone, Sterne, &c.; or, as the maggot takes him, a gun, a fiddle, or a song to make or mend; and at all times some heart's-dear bonnie lass in view—I say I do not see that the turn of mind and pursuits of such an one are in the least more inimical to the sacred interests of piety and virtue than the even lawful bustling and straining after the world's riches and honours: and I do not see but he may gain heaven as well—which, by the bye, is no mean consideration—who steals through the vale of life, amusing himself with every little flower that fortune throws in his way, as he who, straining straight forward, and perhaps spattering all about him, gains some of life's little eminences, where, after all, he can only see and be seen a little more conspicuously than what, in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term the poor indolent devil he has left behind him.

August.

A Prayer, when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm:—

O thou unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear! &c.†

EGOTISMS FROM MY OWN SENSATIONS.

May.

I don't well know what is the reason of it, but some how or other, though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved, yet I never could get the art of commanding respect.‡—I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in what Sterne calls "that understrapping virtue of discretion."—I am so apt to a *lapsus linguæ* that I sometimes think the character of a certain great man I have read of somewhere is very much *apropos* to myself—that he was a compound of great talents and great folly.—N.B. To try if I can discover the causes of this wretched infirmity, and, if possible, to mend it.

August.

However I am pleased with the works of our Scottish poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and the still more excellent Fergusson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c., immortalized in such celebrated performances, while my dear native country, the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous both in ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants; a country where civil, and particularly religious, liberty have ever found their first support, and their last asylum; a country, the birth-place of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen, and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious WALLACE, the SAVIOUR of his country; yet, we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence, to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes on Ayr, and the heathy mountainous source and winding sweep of DOON, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed, &c. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but, alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in native genius and education.§ Obscure I am, and obscure I must be, though no young poet, nor young soldier's heart ever beat more fondly for fame than mine—

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* [See song "Green grow the Rashes, O," page 349.]

† [See "A Prayer under the prospect of Death," p. 238.]

‡ ["There is no doubt that if Burns at any time really laboured under this infirmity, he was successful in inquiring into its causes, and also in his efforts to amend it. When he was, at a later period of life, introduced into the superior circles of society, he did not then appear as a cypher; nor did he, by any violation of the dictates of common sense, give any occasion, even to those who were superciliously disposed, to look upon him with contempt. On the contrary, he was conscious of his own moral and intellectual worth, and never abated an inch of his just claims to due consideration."—CROMEK.

"The following extract of a letter," says Cromek, "from his great and good biographer (Currie), who was an excellent judge of human character, bears an honourable testimony to the habitual firmness, decision, and independence of his mind, which constitute the only solid basis of respectability:—'Burns was a very singular man in the strength and variety of his faculties. I saw him, and once only, in the year 1792. We conversed together for about an hour in the street of Dumfries, and engaged in some very animated conversation. We differed in our sentiments sufficiently to be rather vehemently engaged—and this interview gave me a more lively as well as forcible impression of his talents than any part of his writings. He was a great orator—an original and very versatile genius.'"]

§ ["This kind of feeling," says Cromek, "appears to have animated the Poet's bosom, at a very early period of his life." In a poetical epistle, addressed to the "Gude Wife of Wauchope House," he alludes to the sensations of his early days in the following tender strain of sentiment:—

I mind it weel, in early date, &c.

See page 272.]

"And if there is no other scene of being
Where my insatiate wish may have its fill,—
This something at my heart that heaves for room,
My best, my dearest part, was made in vain."

September.

There is a great irregularity in the old Scottish songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to the exactness of accent and measure that the English poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously, with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old song of "The Mill, Mill, O," to give it a plain, prosaic reading, it halts prodigiously out of measure; on the other hand, the song set to the same tune in Bremner's collection of Scotch songs, which begins "To Fanny fair could I impart," &c. it is most exact measure, and yet, let them both be sung before a real critic, one above the biases of prejudice, but a thorough judge of nature,—how flat and spiritless will the last appear, how trite, and lamely methodical, compared with the wild-warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first! —This is particularly the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable. There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions and fragments which are daily sung to them by my compeers, the common people—a certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllables, and yet, very frequently, nothing, nor even like rhyme, a sameness of jingle, at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes imagine that, perhaps, it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favourite airs, particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.

There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which shew them to be the work of a masterly hand: and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of disappointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names (O how mortifying to a bard's vanity!) are now "buried among the wreck of things which were."

O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well: the last, the meanest of the muses' train—one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor rustic bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love: he, too, has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends, and, worse than all, the loss of the woman he adored. Like you, all his consolation was his muse: she taught him in rustic measures to complain. Happy could he have done it with your strength of imagination and flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your bones! and may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of poesy and love!

September.

There is a fragment in imitation of an old Scotch song, well known among the country ingle sides.—I cannot tell the name, neither of the song nor the tune, but they are in fine unison with one another.—By the way, these old Scottish airs are so nobly sentimental that when one would compose to them, to "south the tune," as our Scotch phrase is, over and over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration, and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of our old Scottish poetry. I shall here set down one verse of the piece mentioned above, both to mark the song and tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times:—

When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the sun,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' their storms are past and gone.*

October, 1785.

If ever any young man, in the vestibule of the world, chance to throw his eye over these pages, let him pay a warm attention to the following observations, as I assure him they are the fruit of a poor devil's dear-bought experience.—I have literally, like that great poet and great gallant, and by consequence, that great fool, Solomon, "turned my eyes to behold madness and folly." Nay, I have, with all the ardour of a lively, fanciful, and whimsical imagination, accompanied with a warm, feeling, poetic heart, shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the first place, let my pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the Deity.

R. B.

[Here the manuscript closes abruptly.]

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* Alluding to the misfortunes he feelingly laments before this verse. [This is the author's note.]

SECOND COMMON PLACE BOOK,*

BEGUN IN EDINBURGH, APRIL, 1787.

As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new, to one bred up in the shades of life as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes in a letter to Mr. Palgrave, that "half a word fixed upon, or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection."

I don't know how it is with the world in general, but, with me, making my remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure. I want some one to laugh with me, some one to be grave with me, some one to please me and help my discrimination with his or her own remark; and at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration.

The world are so busied with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest, or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them, except where that observation is a sucker, or branch of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, notwithstanding all the sentimental flights of novel-writers, and the sage philosophy of moralists, whether we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship, as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repenting his confidence.

For these reasons, I am determined to make these pages my confidant. I will sketch every character that any way strikes me, to the best of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, *without feud or favour*. Where I hit on any thing clever, my own applause will in some measure feast my vanity; and, begging Patroclus' and Achates' pardon, I think a lock and key a security at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever.

My own private story likewise, my love-adventures, my rambles; the frowns and smiles of fortune on my bardship; my poems and fragments that must never see the light, shall be occasionally inserted.—In short, never did four shillings purchase so much friendship, since confidence went first to market, or honesty was set up to sale.

To these seemingly invidious, but too just, ideas of human friendship I would cheerfully make one exception—the connexion between two persons of different sexes, when their interests are united and absorbed by the tie of love—

> "When thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
> And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart."

There, confidence, confidence that exalts them the more in one another's opinion, that endears them the more to each other's hearts, unreservedly "reigns and revels." But this is not my lot, and, in my situation, if I am wise (which by the bye I have no great chance of being), my fate should be cast with the Psalmist's sparrow, "to watch alone on the house-tops."—Oh, the pity!

I have heard and read a good deal of philosophy, benevolence, and greatness of soul: and when rounded with the flourish of declamatory periods, or poured in the melliffluence of Parnassian measure, they have a tolerable effect

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* [The above memoranda formed a part of the rough materials out of which Burns composed a more extended and elaborate journal, commenced in the spring of the year 1787, in which he recorded his observations on men and manners, literary anecdotes, scraps of verse, favourite passages from his letters, and not a little searching criticism. Of that valuable volume, nothing it is believed now exists, save the fragments contained in the following pages. Cromek announces its probable fate in these words:—"On his arrival in Edinburgh, Burns took lodgings with a Mrs. Carfrae, in the Lawn-market, where a person, a carpenter, then working at Leith, often called to see him. This man, in the latter part of the year 1787, or beginning of 1788, enlisted into the Company of Artificers then raising to go to Gibraltar. Just before he set off he got access to Burns's room, in his absence, and stole the book, which contained a faithful record of every thing interesting that happened to him at Edinburgh, with characteristic sketches of the different literary gentlemen to whom he had been introduced. He was written to repeatedly to restore the book, a clasped quarto, but in vain. He had even the audacity to acknowledge the theft, but he refused to part with the journal. It is supposed that he died in the year 1798, as he has not been heard of since."

Of the value of the work we have thus, I fear, lost, some estimate may be formed from what Currie says of the opportunities which Burns enjoyed of making observations on Edinburgh society—his tact and talent for making them cannot be questioned.

"Burns entered into several parties of this description, with the usual vehemence of his character. His generous affections, his ardent eloquence, his brilliant and daring imagination, fitted him to be the idol of such associations; and accustoming himself to conversation of unlimited range, and to festive indulgences that scorned restraint, he gradually lost some portion of his relish for the more pure, but less poignant, pleasures to be found in the circles of taste, elegance, and literature. The sudden alteration in his habits of life operated on him physically as well as morally. The humble fare of an Ayr-shire peasant he had exchanged for the luxuries of the Scottish metropolis, and the effects of this change on his ardent constitution could not be inconsiderable. But whatever influence might be produced on his conduct, his excellent understanding suffered no corresponding debasement. He estimated his friends and associates of every description at their proper value, and appreciated his own conduct with a precision that might give scope to much curious and melancholy reflection. He saw his danger, and at times formed resolutions to guard against it; but he had embarked on the tide of dissipation, and was borne along its stream."

The fragments printed in the former editions of the Poet's works are merely the first draughts of certain passages in the letters to Clarinda, which we have given entire at the end of the volume.]

on a musical ear; but when all these high-sounding professions are compared with the very act and deed, as it is usually performed, I do not think there is any thing in, or belonging to, human nature so badly disproportionate. In fact, were it not for a very few of our kind, among whom an honoured friend of mine—whom to you, Sir, I will not name—in a distinguished instance, the very existence of magnanimity, generosity, and all their kindred virtues, would be as much a question with metaphysicians as the existence of witchcrafts.

The whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old father Smeaton, whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline . . . . ,—a senseless rabble.

I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man. I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. "Some folk hae a hantle o' fauts, and I'm but a ne'er-do-weel." To close this melancholy reflection, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick by the title of the wabster's grace—

Some say we're thieves, and e'en sae are we!
Some say we lie, and e'en sae do we!
Gude forgi'e us! and I hope sae will he!
Up!—and to your looms, lads!

I have lately been much mortified with contemplating an unlucky imperfection in the very framing and construction of my soul; namely, a blundering inaccuracy of her olfactory organs in hitting the scent of craft or design in my fellow-creatures. I do not mean any compliment to my ingenuousness, or to hint that the defect is in consequence of the unsuspicious simplicity of conscious truth and honour. I take it to be, in some way or other, an imperfection in the mental sight; or, metaphor apart, some modification of dulness. In two or three small instances, lately, I have been most shamefully out.

An old man's dying, except he has been a very benevolent character, or in some particucular situation of life that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think an event of the most trifling moment to the world. Man is naturally a kind, benevolent animal; but he is dropt into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whoreson, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food, that, in fact, he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself.

Poets, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of beauty. If they are really poets of Nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate than those of most of the world. In the cheerful bloom of spring, or the pensive mildness of autumn; the grandeur of summer, or the hoary majesty of winter,—the poet feels a charm unknown to the rest of his species. Even the sight of a fine flower, or the company of a fine woman (by far the finest part of God's works below), have sensations for the poetic heart that the herd of mankind are strangers to.

What pleasure is in the power of the fortunate and happy, by their notice and patronage, to brighten the countenance and glad the heart of depressed worth! I am not so angry with mankind for their deaf economy of the purse. The goods of this world cannot be divided without being lessened; but why be a niggard of that which bestows bliss on a fellow-creature, yet takes nothing from our own means of enjoyment? We wrap up ourselves in the cloak of our own better fortune, and turn away our eyes, lest the wants and woes of our brother-mortals should disturb the selfish apathy of our souls!

I have every possible reverence for the much-talked-of world beyond the grave; and I wish that which piety believes, and virtue deserves, may be all matter-of-fact.

Strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I, likewise, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinosa trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength, of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

THE POET'S

ASSIGNMENT OF HIS WORKS.

[The admirers of Burns are indebted to the kindness of Gilbert M'Nab, Esq. of Ayr, for the following important document, which throws light both on the actions and feelings of the poet during a period when "hungry ruin had him in the wind."]

Know all men by these presents that I, Robert Burns of Mossgiel: whereas I intend to leave Scotland and go abroad, and having acknowledged myself the father of a child named Elizabeth, begot upon Elizabeth Paton in Largieside: and whereas Gilbert Burns in Mossgiel, my brother, has become bound, and hereby binds and obliges himself to aliment, clothe and educate my said natural child in a suitable manner as if she were his own, in case her mother choose to part with her, and that until she arrive at the age of fifteen years. Therefore, and to enable the said Gilbert Burns to make good his said engagement, wit ye me to have assigned, disponed, conveyed, and made over to, and in favour of, the said Gilbert Burns, his heirs, executors, and assignees, who are always to be bound in like manner with himself, all and sundry goods, gear, corn, cattle, horses, nolt, sheep, household furniture, and all other moveable effects of whatever kind that I shall leave behind me on my departure from this Kingdom, after allowing for my part of the conjunct debts due by the said Gilbert Burns and me as joint tacksmen of the farm of Mossgiel. And particularly, without prejudice of the foresaid generality, the profits that may arise from the publication of my poems presently in the press. And also, I hereby dispone and convey to him in trust for behoof of my said natural daughter, the copyright of said poems in so far as I can dispose of the same by law, after she arrives at the above age of fifteen years complete. Surrogating and substituting the said Gilbert Burns my brother and his foresaids in my full right, title, room and place of the whole premises, with power to him to intromit with, and dispose upon the same at pleasure, and in general to do every other thing in the premises that I could have done myself before granting hereof, but always with and under the conditions before expressed. And I oblige myself to warrand this disposition and assignation from my own proper fact and deed allenarly. Consenting to the registration hereof in the books of Council and Session, or any other Judges' books competent, therein to remain for preservation, and constitute

Proculars, &c. In witness whereof I have written and signed these presents, consisting of this and the preceding page, on stamped paper, with my own hand, at the Mossgiel, the twenty-second day of July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six years.

(Signed) Robert Burns.

Upon the twenty-fourth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six years, I, William Chalmer, Notary Publick, past to the Mercat Cross of Ayr head Burgh of the Sheriffdome thereof, and thereat I made due and lawfull intimation of the foregoing disposition and assignation to his Majesties lieges, that they might not pretend ignorance thereof, by reading the same over in presence of a number of people assembled. Whereupon William Crooks, writer, in Ayr, as attorney for the before designed Gilbert Burns, protested that the same was lawfully intimated, and asked and took instruments in my hands. These things were done betwixt the hours of ten and eleven forenoon, before and in presence of William M'Cubbin, and William Eaton, apprentices to the Sheriff Clerk of Ayr, witnesses to the premises.

(Signed) William Chalmer, N. P.

William M'Cubbin, Witness.

William Eaton, Witness.

LETTERS TO CLARINDA.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following letters, with the exception of one only, were written by ROBERT BURNS before his marriage. They are printed *verbatim* from the originals, and where any of them are torn, which unfortunately is the case with two or three, the deficiencies are marked by *asterisks*.

The lady to whom they are addressed seems to have encouraged a friendly correspondence with the Poet, whose fascinating powers of mind must necessarily have produced, on her part, esteem, and admiration.

Yet, although he was forbidden to indulge the more tender affections of the heart, it was natural to expect, from the strong sensibility and delicate feelings of the Bard, that, in his correspondence with a young and amiable woman, love must be a principal theme.

As these letters, on perusal, will be found to possess every mark of the strong and vigorous mind of Burns, they will, in no degree, diminish that celebrity he has so justly merited by his epistolary compositions.

No. I.*

Thursday Evening.

MADAM,

I HAD set no small store by my tea-drinking to-night, and have not often been so disappointed. Saturday evening I shall embrace the opportunity with the greatest pleasure. I leave this town this day se'ennight, and, probably for a couple of twelvemonths; but must ever regret that I so lately got an acquaintance I shall ever highly esteem, and in whose welfare I shall ever be warmly interested.

Our worthy common friend, in her usual pleasant way, rallied me a good deal on my new acquaintance, and in the humour of her ideas I wrote some lines, which I enclose you, as I think they have a good deal of poetic merit; and Miss ——— tells me you are not only a critic, but a poetess. Fiction, you know, is the native region of poetry; and I hope you will pardon my vanity in sending you the bagatelle as a tolerable off-hand *jeu-d'esprit*. I have several poetic trifles, which I shall gladly leave with Miss ———, or you, if they were worth house room; as there are scarcely two people on earth by whom it would mortify me more to be forgotten, though at the distance of nine-score miles.—I am, Madam, with the highest respect, your very humble Servant,

* * *

No. II.†

Saturday Evening.

I CAN say with truth, Madam, that I never met with a person in my life whom I more anxiously wished to meet again than yourself. To-night I was to have had that very great pleasure; I was intoxicated with the idea, but an unlucky fall from a coach has so bruised one of my knees that I can't stir my leg; so if I don't see you again, I shall not rest in my grave for chagrin. I was vexed to the soul I had not seen you sooner; I determined to cultivate your friendship with the enthusiasm of religion; but thus has Fortune ever served me. I cannot bear the idea of leaving Edinburgh without seeing you. I know not how to account for it—I am strangely taken with some people, nor am I often mistaken. You are a

* [This is generally printed as No. II. of the letters, while in fact it should be No. I. Its date must have been the 6th Dec. 1787. He was to have drunk tea that day, but was disappointed by the lady who afterwards asked him for Saturday, on which day the accident to his leg happened.—MOTHERWELL.]

† [The date of this letter must have been the 8th Dec. 1787. Burns met with his accident on that day. Vide his letter to Miss Chalmers, in which he alludes to that unlucky occurrence.—*Ibid.*]

stranger to me; but I am an odd being; some yet unnamed feelings, things, not principles, but better than whims, carry me farther than boasted reason ever did a philosopher.—Farewell! every happiness be yours!

No. III.

Friday Evening, 22d Dec., 1787.

I BEG your pardon, my dear "Clarinda," for the fragment scrawl I sent you yesterday.* I really do not know what I wrote. A gentleman, for whose character, abilities, and critical knowledge, I have the highest veneration, called in just as I had begun the second sentence, and I would not make the porter wait. I read to my much-respected friend several of my own bagatelles, and, among others, your lines, which I had copied out. He began some criticisms on them as on the other pieces, when I informed him they were the work of a young lady in this town, which, I assure you, made him stare. My learned friend seriously protested that he did not believe any young woman in Edinburgh was capable of such lines: and if you know any thing of Professor Gregory, you will neither doubt of his abilities nor his sincerity. I do love you, if possible, still better for having so fine a taste and turn for poesy. I have again gone wrong in my usual unguarded way, but you may erase the word, and put esteem, respect, or any other tame Dutch expression you please in its place. I believe there is no holding converse, nor carrying on correspondence, with an amiable woman, much less a *gloriously amiable fine woman*, without some mixture of that delicious passion, whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honour of being—But why be hurt or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue? Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love, and add to it the generous, the honourable sentiments of manly friendship: and I know but *one* more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries; it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness, but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

I enclose you a few lines I composed on a late melancholy occasion. I will not give above five or six copies of it at all, and I would be hurt if any friend should give any copies without my consent.

You cannot imagine, Clarinda (I like the idea of Arcadian names in a commerce of this kind), how much store I have set by the hopes of your future friendship. I do not know if you have a just idea of my character, but I wish you to see me *as I am*. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange Will-o'-Wisp being; the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are *pride* and *passion*. The first I have endeavoured to humanize into integrity and honour; the last makes me a devotee to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion, or friendship—either of them, or all together, as I happen to be inspired. 'Tis true, I never saw you but once; but how much acquaintance did I form with you in that once! Do not think I flatter you, or have a design upon you, Clarinda; I have too much pride for the one, and too little cold contrivance for the other; but of all God's creatures I ever could approach in the beaten way of my acquaintance, you struck me with the deepest, the strongest, the most permanent impression. I say, the most permanent, because I know myself well, and how far I can promise either in my prepossessions or powers. Why are you unhappy? And why are so many of our fellow-creatures, unworthy to belong to the same species with you, blest with all they can wish? You have a hand all benevolent to give—Why were you denied the pleasure? You have a heart formed—gloriously formed—for all the most refined luxuries of love: Why was that heart ever wrung? O Clarinda! shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being, where the lavish hand of plenty shall minister to the highest wish of benevolence; and where the chill north-wind of prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment? If we do not, man was made in vain! I deserved most of the unhappy hours that have lingered over my head; they were the wages of my labour: but what unprovoked demon, malignant as hell, stole upon the confidence of unmistrusting busy Fate, and dashed *your* cup of life with undeserved sorrow?

Let me know how long your stay will be out of town; I shall count the hours till you inform me of your return. Cursed *etiquette* forbids your seeing me just now; and so soon as I can walk I must bid Edinburgh adieu. Lord, why was I born to see misery which I cannot relieve, and to meet with friends whom I cannot enjoy? I look back with the pang of unavailing avarice on my loss in not knowing you sooner: all last winter, these three months past, what luxury of intercourse have I not lost! Perhaps, though, 'twas better for my peace. You see I am either above, or incapable of, dissimulation. I believe it is want of that particular genius. I despise design, because I want

* [This does not appear. It probably talked of love, and called forth the verses beginning, "Talk not of love," and to which she must have signed Clarinda, from its being marked as a quotation.—MOTHERWELL.]

either coolness or wisdom to be capable of it. I am interrupted.—Adieu! my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

No. IV.*

YOU are right, my dear Clarinda: a friendly correspondence goes for nothing, except one writes his or her undisguised sentiments. Yours please me for their intrinsic merit, as well as because they are *yours*, which, I assure you, is to me a high recommendation. Your religious sentiments, Madam, I revere. If you have, on some suspicious evidence, from some lying oracle, learned that I despise or ridicule so sacredly important a matter as real religion, you have, my Clarinda, much misconstrued your friend.—"I am not mad, most noble Festus!" Have you ever met a perfect character? Do we not sometimes rather exchange faults than get rid of them? For instance, I am perhaps tired with, and shocked at, a life too much the prey of giddy inconsistencies and thoughtless follies; by degrees I grow sober, prudent, and statedly pious—I say statedly, because the most unaffected devotion is not at all inconsistent with my first character—I join the world in congratulating myself on the happy change. But let me pry more narrowly into this affair. Have I, at bottom, any thing of a secret pride in these endowments and emendations? Have I nothing of a presbyterian sourness, an hypocritical severity, when I survey my less regular neighbours? In a word, have I missed all those nameless and numberless modifications of indistinct selfishness, which are so near our own eyes that we can scarcely bring them within the sphere of our vision, and which the known spotless cambric of our character hides from the ordinary observer?

My definition of worth is short; truth and humanity respecting our fellow-creatures; reverence and humility in the presence of that Being, my Creator and Preserver, and who, I have every reason to believe, will one day be my Judge. The first part of my definition is the creature of unbiassed instinct; the last is the child of after reflection. Where I found these two essentials, I would gently note, and slightly mention, any attendant flaws—flaws, the marks, the consequences, of human nature.

I can easily enter into the sublime pleasures that your strong imagination and keen sensibility must derive from religion, particularly if a little in the shade of misfortune: but I own I cannot, without a marked grudge, see Heaven totally engross so amiable, so charming, a woman as my friend Clarinda; and should be very well pleased at *a circumstance* that would put it in the power of somebody (happy somebody!) to divide her attention, with all the delicacy and tenderness of an earthly attachment.

You will not easily persuade me that you have not a grammatical knowledge of the English language. So far from being inaccurate, you are elegant beyond any woman of my acquaintance, except one, whom I wish you knew.

Your last verses to me have so delighted me that I have got an excellent old Scots air that suits the measure, and you shall see them in print in the Scots Musical Museum, a work publishing by a friend of mine in this town. I want four stanzas; you gave me but three, and one of them alluded to an expression in my former letter; so I have taken your first two verses, with a slight alteration in the second, and have added a third; but you must help me to a fourth. Here they are: the latter half of the first stanza would have been worthy of Sappho; I am in raptures with it.

Talk not of Love, it gives me pain,
For Love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain,
And sunk me deep in woe.

But Friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was formed to prove;
There, welcome, win, and wear the prize,
But never talk of love.

Your friendship much can make me blest,
O why that bliss destroy!
[only]
Why urge the odious one request,
[will]
You know I must deny.

The alteration in the second stanza is no improvement, but there was a slight inaccuracy in your rhyme. The third I only offer to your choice, and have left two words for your determination. The air is 'The banks of Spey,' and is most beautiful.

To-morrow evening I intend taking a chair, and paying a visit at Park Place to a much-valued old friend. If I could be sure of finding you at home (and I will send one of the chairmen to call), I would spend from five to six o'clock with you, as I go past. I cannot do more at this time, as I have something on my hand that hurries me much. I propose giving you the first call, my old friend the second, and Miss ———— as I return home. Do not break any engagement for me, as I will spend another evening with you, at any rate, before I leave town.

* [This letter appears to have been written about the 1st of January 1788, and probably the order in which it is now inserted is correct.—MOTHERWELL.]

Do not tell me that you are pleased when your friends inform you of your faults. I am ignorant what they are; but I am sure they must be such evanescent trifles, compared with your personal and mental accomplishments, that I would despise the ungenerous narrow soul who would notice any shadow of imperfections you may seem to have, any other way than in the most delicate agreeable raillery. Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly feeling tie of bosom-friendship, when, in their foolish officiousness, they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity that fires at being trifled with, or lowered, or even too nearly approached.

You need make no apology for long letters: I am even with you. Many happy new years to you, charming Clarinda! I can't dissemble, were it to shun perdition. He who sees you as I have done, and does not love you, deserves to be damn'd for his stupidity! He who loves you, and would injure you, deserves to be doubly damn'd for his villany! Adieu.

SYLVANDER.

P.S. What would you think of this for a fourth stanza?

Your thought, if love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought,
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.

No. V.

Monday Evening, 11 *o'clock*, 21*st January*.

WHY have I not heard from you, Clarinda? To-day I expected it; and before supper, when a letter to me was announced, my heart danced with rapture: but behold, 'twas some fool who had taken it into his head to turn poet, and made me an offering of the first-fruits of his nonsense. "It is not poetry, but prose run mad." Did I ever repeat to you an epigram I made on a Mr. Elphinstone, who has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet?—The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose notes. I was sitting in the shop of a merchant of my acquaintance, waiting somebody; he put Elphinstone into my hand, and asked my opinion of it; I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did.

TO MR. ELPHINSTONE, &c.

O thou, whom poesy abhors!
Whom prose has turned out of doors!
Heard'st thou that groan? proceed no further;
'Twas laurel'd Martial roaring Murther!

I am determined to see you, if at all possible, on Saturday evening. Next week I must sing

The night is my departing night,
The morn's the day I maun awa;
There's neither friend nor foe o' mine,
But wishes that I were awa!
What I hae done for lack o' wit,
I never, never can reca';
I hope ye're a' my friends as yet,
Guid night, and joy be wi' you a'!

If I could see you sooner, I would be so much the happier; but I would not purchase the dearest gratification on earth, if it must be at your expense in worldly censure, far less inward peace!

I shall certainly be ashamed of thus scrawling whole sheets of incoherence. The only *unity* (a sad word with poets and critics!) in my ideas is CLARINDA. There my heart "reigns and revels."

"What art thou, Love? whence are those charms,
That thus thou bear'st an universal rule?
For thee the soldier quits his arms,
The king turns slave, the wise man fool.
In vain we chase thee from the field,
And with cool thoughts resist thy yoke;
Next tide of blood, alas! we yield;
And all those high resolves are broke!"

I like to have quotations for every occasion. They give one's ideas so pat, and save one the trouble of finding expression adequate to one's feelings. I think it is one of the greatest pleasures, attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, loves, &c., an embodied form in verse, which to me is ever immediate ease. Goldsmith says finely of his Muse—

"Thou source of all my bliss and all my wo,
Thou found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so."

My limb has been so well to-day that I have gone up and down stairs often without my staff. To-morrow I hope to walk once again on my own legs to dinner. It is only next street—Adieu.

SYLVANDER.

No. VI.

Saturday Noon, 26*th January*.

SOME days, some nights, nay, some *hours*, like the "ten righteous persons in Sodom," save the rest of the vapid, tiresome, miserable months and years of life. One of these hours, my dear Clarinda blessed me with yesternight.

——"One well spent hour,
In such a tender circumstance for friends,
Is better than an age of common time!"

THOMSON.

My favourite feature in Milton's Satan is his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied—in short, the wild broken fragments of a noble exalted mind in ruins. I

meant no more by saying he was a favourite hero of mine.

I mentioned to you my letter to Dr. Moore, giving an account of my life: it is truth, every word of it; and will give you the just idea of a man whom you have honoured with your friendship. I am afraid you will hardly be able to make sense of so torn a piece.—Your verses I shall muse on deliciously, as I gaze on your image in my mind's eye, in my heart's core; they will be in time enough for a week to come. I am truly happy your head-ache is better.—O, how can pain or evil be so daringly, unfeelingly, cruelly savage as to wound so noble a mind, so lovely a form!

My little fellow is all my name-sake.—Write me soon. My every, strongest good wishes attend you, Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

I know not what I have written—I am pestered with people around me.

No. VII.

Sunday Night, 27th January.

THE impertinence of fools has joined with a return of an old indisposition, to make me good for nothing to-day. The paper has lain before me all this evening, to write to my dear Clarinda, but—

"Fools rush'd on fools, as waves succeed to waves."

I cursed them in my soul; they sacrilegiously disturbed my meditations on her who holds my heart. What a creature is man! A little alarm last night and to-day, that I am mortal, has made such a revolution on my spirits! There is no philosophy, no divinity, comes half so home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves heaven. 'Tis the wild ravings of an imaginary hero in bedlam.

I can no more, Clarinda; I can scarcely hold up my head; but I am happy you do not know it, you would be so uneasy.

SYLVANDER.

Monday Morning, 28th January.

I am, my lovely friend, much better this morning on the whole; but I have a horrid languor on my spirits.

"Sick of the world, and all its joys,
My soul in pining sadness mourns;
Dark scenes of woe my mind employs,
The past and present in their turns."

Have you ever met with a saying of the great, and likewise good, Mr. Locke, author of the famous Essay on the Human Understanding? He wrote a letter to a friend, directing it "not to be delivered till after my decease:" it ended thus—"I know you loved me when living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. All the use to be made of it is that this life affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of having done well, and the hopes of another life. Adieu! I leave my best wishes with you.

J. LOCKE."

Clarinda, may I reckon on your friendship for life? I think I may. Thou Almighty Preserver of men! thy friendship, which hitherto I have too much neglected, to secure it shall, all the future days and nights of my life, be my steady care! The idea of my Clarinda follows—

"Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, her lov'd idea lies."

But I fear that inconstancy, the consequent imperfection of human weakness. Shall I meet with a friendship that defies years of absence, and the chances and changes of fortune? Perhaps "such things are;" *one honest* man* I have great hopes from that way: but who, except a romance writer, would think on a *love* that could promise for life, in spite of distance, absence, chance, and change; and that, too, with slender hopes of fruition? For my own part, I can say to myself in both requisitions, "Thou art the man!" I dare, in cool resolve I dare, declare myself that friend, and that lover. If womankind is capable of such things, Clarinda is. I trust that she is; and feel I shall be miserable if she is not. There is not one virtue which gives worth, nor one sentiment which does honour to the sex, that she does not possess, superior to any woman I ever saw: her exalted mind, aided a little, perhaps, by her situation, is, I think, capable of that nobly-romantic love-enthusiasm.

May I see you on Wednesday evening, my dear angel? The next Wednesday again will, I conjecture, be a hated day to us both. I tremble for censorious remark, for your sake; but in extraordinary cases, may not usual and useful precaution be a little dispensed with? Three evenings, three swift-winged evenings, with pinions of down, are all the past; I dare not calculate the future. I shall call at Miss ——'s to morrow evening; 'twill be a farewell call.

I have written out my last sheet of paper, so I am reduced to my last half-sheet. What a strange mysterious faculty is that thing called imagination! We have no ideas almost at all of another world; but I have often amused myself with visionary schemes of what happiness might be enjoyed by small alterations—alterations that we can fully enter into, in this present state of existence. For instance, sup-

* [Alluding to Captain Brown.]

pose you and I, just as we are at present; the same reasoning powers, sentiments, and even desires; the same fond curiosity for knowledge and remarking observation in our minds; and imagine our bodies free from pain and the necessary supplies for the wants of nature at all times, and easily within our reach: imagine further, that we were set free from the laws of gravitation, which bind us to this globe, and could at pleasure fly, without inconvenience, through all the yet unconjectured bounds of creation, what a life of bliss would we lead, in our mutual pursuit of virtue and knowledge, and our mutual enjoyment of friendship and love!

I see you laughing at my fairy fancies, and calling me a voluptuous Mahometan; but I am certain I would be a happy creature, beyond any thing we call bliss here below; nay, it would be a paradise congenial to you too. Don't you see us, hand in hand, or rather, my arm about your lovely waist, making our remarks on Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars; or surveying a comet, flaming innoxious by us, as we just now would mark the passing pomp of a travelling monarch; or in a shady bower of Mercury or Venus, dedicating the hour to love, in mutual converse, relying honour, and revelling endearment, whilst the most exalted strains of poesy and harmony would be the ready spontaneous language of our souls! Devotion is the favourite employment of your heart; so is it of mine: what incentives then to, and powers for, reverence, gratitude, faith, and hope, in all the fervours of adoration and praise to that Being, whose unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, so pervaded, so inspired, every sense and feeling! —By this time, I dare say, you will be blessing the neglect of the maid that leaves me destitute of paper!

SYLVANDER.

No. VIII.*

Tuesday Night.

I AM delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for religion. Those of either sex, but particularly the female, who are lukewarm in that most important of all things, "O my soul, come not thou into their secrets!" —I feel myself deeply interested in your good opinion, and will lay before you the outlines of my belief. He, who is our Author and Preserver, and will one day be our Judge, must be (not for his sake in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts) the object of our reverential awe and grateful adoration: He is Almighty and all-bounteous, we are weak and dependent; hence prayer and every other sort of devotion.——"He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life;" consequently it must be in every one's power to embrace his offer of "everlasting life;" otherwise he could not, in justice, condemn those who did not. A mind pervaded, actuated, and governed by purity, truth, and charity, though it does not *merit* heaven, yet is an absolutely necessary pre-requisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed; and, by divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of attaining "everlasting life:" hence the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable, extrude themselves from eternal bliss, by their unfitness for enjoying it. The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends known to himself, into the hands of Jesus Christ, a great personage, whose relation to him we cannot comprehend, but whose relation to us is a guide and Saviour; and who, except for our own obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at last.

These are my tenets, my lovely friend; and which, I think, cannot be well disputed. My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of Jamie Dean's grace, an honest weaver in Ayr-shire; "Lord, grant that we may lead a guid life! for a guid life maks a guid end, at least it helps weel!"

I am flattered by the entertainment you tell me you have found in my packet. You see me as I have been, you know me as I am, and may guess at what I am likely to be. I too may say, "Talk not of love," &c., for indeed he has "plunged me deep in woe!" Not that I ever saw a woman who pleased unexceptionably, as my Clarinda elegantly says, "In the companion, the friend, and the mistress." *One* indeed I could except—*One*, before passion threw its mists over my discernment, I knew *the* first of women! Her name is indelibly written in my heart's core—but I dare not look in on it—a degree of agony would be the consequence. Oh! thou perfidious, cruel, mischief-making demon, who presidest over that frantic passion—thou mayest, thou dost, poison my peace, but thou shalt not taint my honour—I would not, for a single moment, give an asylum to the most distant imagination that would shadow the faintest outline of a selfish gratification, at the expense of her whose happiness is twisted with the threads of my existence.——May she be as happy as she deserves! And if my tenderest, faithfullest friendship can add to her bliss, I shall at least have one solid mine of enjoyment in my bosom! *Don't guess at these ravings!*

I watched at our front window to-day, but was disappointed. It has been a day of disap-

* [This appears to have been written on the 8th or 15th of January.]

pointments. I am just risen from a two hours' bout after supper, with silly or sordid souls, who could relish nothing in common with me but the Port.——*One*——'Tis now "witching time of night;" and whatever is out of joint in the foregoing scrawl, impute it to enchantments and spells; for I can't look over it, but will seal it up directly, as I don't care for to-morrow's criticisms on it.

You are by this time fast asleep, Clarinda; may good angels attend and guard you as constantly and faithfully as my good wishes do!

"Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces."

John Milton, I wish thy soul better rest than I expect on my pillow to-night! O for a little of the cart-horse part of human nature! Good night, my dearest Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

No. IX.

Thursday Noon, 10th or 17th January.

I AM certain I saw you, Clarinda; but you don't look to the proper story for a poet's lodging—

"Where speculation roosted near the sky."

I could almost have thrown myself over for very vexation. Why didn't you look higher? It has spoiled my peace for this day. To be so near my charming Clarinda; to miss her look when it was searching for me—I am sure the soul is capable of disease, for mine has convulsed itself into an inflammatory fever.

You have converted me, Clarinda. (I shall love that name while I live: there is heavenly music in it.) Booth and Amelia I know well.* Your sentiments on that subject, as they are on every subject, are just and noble. "To be feelingly alive to kindness, and to unkindness," is a charming female character.

What I said in my last letter, the powers of fuddling sociality only know for me. By yours, I understand my good star has been partly in my horizon, when I got wild in my reveries. Had that evil planet, which has almost all my life shed its baleful rays on my devoted head, been, as usual, in my zenith, I had certainly blabbed something that would have pointed out to you the dear object of my tenderest friendship, and, in spite of me, something more. Had that fatal information escaped me, and it was merely chance, or kind stars, that it did not, I had been undone! You would never have written me, except perhaps *once* more! O, I could curse circumstances, and the coarse tie of human laws, which keep fast what common sense would loose, and which bars that happiness itself cannot give—happiness which otherwise Love and Honour would warrant! But hold—I shall make no more "hair breadth 'scapes."

My friendship, Clarinda, is a life-rent business. My likings are both strong and eternal. I told you I had but one male friend: I have but two female. I should have a third, but she is surrounded by the blandishments of flattery and courtship. * * * I register in my heart's core—* * * *. Miss N—— can tell how divine she is. She is worthy of a place in the same bosom with my Clarinda. That is the highest compliment I can pay her.

Farewell, Clarinda! Remember

SYLVANDER.

* [See Fielding's novel of Amelia.]

No. X.

Saturday Morning, 12th or 19th January.

YOUR thoughts on religion, Clarinda, shall be welcome. You may perhaps distrust me, when I say 'tis also my favourite topic; but mine is the religion of the bosom. I hate the very idea of a controversial divinity; as I firmly believe that every honest upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted of the Deity. If your verses, as you seem to hint, contain censure, except you want an occasion to break with me, don't send them. I have a little infirmity in my disposition, that where I fondly love, or highly esteem, I cannot bear reproach.

"Reverence thyself" is a sacred maxim, and I wish to cherish it. I think I told you Lord Bolingbroke's saying to Swift—"Adieu, dear Swift, with all thy faults I love thee entirely; make an effort to love me with all mine." A glorious sentiment, and without which there can be no friendship! I do highly, very highly esteem you indeed, Clarinda—you merit it all! Perhaps, too, I scorn dissimulation! I could fondly love you: judge then, what a maddening sting your reproach would be. "O! I have sins to *Heaven*, but none to *you!*"—With what pleasure would I meet you to-day, but I cannot walk to meet the fly. I hope to be able to see you on *foot*, about the middle of next week.

I am interrupted—perhaps you are not sorry for it, you will tell me—but I wont anticipate blame. O Clarinda! did you know how dear to me is your look of kindness, your smile of approbation! you would not, either in prose or verse, risk a censorious remark.

"Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe!"

SYLVANDER.

No. XI.

Tuesday Morning, 29th January.

I CANNOT go out to-day, my dearest Clarinda, without sending you half a line, by way of a sin-offering; but, believe me, 'twas the sin of ignorance. Could you think that I *intended* to hurt you by any thing I said yesternight? Nature has been too kind to you for your happiness, your delicacy, your sensibility.—O why should such glorious qualifications be the fruitful source of woe! You have "murdered sleep" to me last night. I went to bed, impressed with an idea that you were unhappy: and every start I closed my eyes, busy Fancy painted you in such scenes of romantic misery that I would almost be persuaded you were not well this morning.

> ——————"If I unweetingly have offended,
> Impute it not."
> ——————"But while we live,
> But one short hour, perhaps, between us two
> Let there be peace."

If Mary is not gone by the time this reaches you, give her my best compliments. She is a charming girl, and highly worthy of the noblest love.

I send you a poem to read, till I call on you this night, which will be about nine. I wish I could procure some potent spell, some fairy charm that would protect from injury, or restore to rest that bosom-chord, "tremblingly alive all o'er," on which hangs your peace of mind. I thought, vainly, I fear, thought that the devotion of love—love strong as even you can feel—love guarded, invulnerably guarded, by all the purity of virtue, and all the pride of honour; I thought such a love would make you happy—will I be mistaken? I can no more for hurry * * * *

No. XII.

Sunday Morning, 3d February.

I HAVE just been before the throne of my God, Clarinda; according to my association of ideas, my sentiments of love and friendship, I next devote myself to you. Yesterday night I was happy—happiness "that the world cannot give."—I kindle at the recollection; but it is a flame where innocence looks smiling on, and honour stands by a sacred guard.—Your heart, your fondest wishes, your dearest thoughts, these are yours to bestow: your person is unapproachable by the laws of your country; and he loves not as I do who would make you miserable.

You are an angel, Clarinda; you are surely no mortal that "the earth owns."—To kiss your hand, to live on your smile, is to me far more exquisite bliss than the dearest favours that the fairest of the sex, yourself excepted, can bestow.

Sunday Evening.

You are the constant companion of my thoughts. How wretched is the condition of one who is haunted with conscious guilt, and trembling under the idea of dreaded vengeance! and what a placid calm, what a charming secret enjoyment it gives, to bosom the kind feelings of friendship, and the fond throes of love! Out upon the tempest of anger, the acrimonious gall of fretful impatience, the sullen frost of louring resentment, or the corroding poison of withered envy! They eat up the immortal part of man! If they spent their fury only on the unfortunate objects of them, it would be something in their favour; but these miserable passions, like traitor Iscariot, betray their lord and master.

Thou Almighty Author of peace, and goodness, and love! do thou give me the social heart that kindly tastes of every man's cup!—Is it a draught of joy?—warm and open my heart to share it with cordial unenvying rejoicing! Is it the bitter potion of sorrow?—melt my heart with sincerely sympathetic woe! Above all, do thou give me the manly mind, that resolutely exemplifies in life and manners those sentiments which I would wish to be thought to possess! The friend of my soul—there, may I never deviate from the firmest fidelity and most active kindness! Clarinda, the dear object of my fondest love; there, may the most sacred inviolate honour, the most faithful kindling constancy, ever watch and animate my every thought and imagination!

Did you ever meet with the following lines spoken of Religion, your darling topic?

> "'*Tis this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright!
> '*Tis this* that gilds the horrors of our night;
> When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few,
> When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
> 'Tis this that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
> Disarms affliction, or repels its dart;
> Within the breast bids purest rapture rise,
> Bids smiling Conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I met with these verses very early in life, and was so delighted with them that I have them by me, copied at school.

Good night and sound rest, my dearest Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

No. XIII.*

I was on the way, *my Love*, to meet you, (I never do things by halves) when I got your

* [This letter must have been written early in February.]

card. M——— goes out of town to-morrow morning to see a brother of his who is newly arrived from ———. I am determined that he and I shall call on you together; so, look you, lest I should never see to-morrow, we will call on you to-night; ——— and you may put off tea till about seven; at which time, in the Galloway phrase, 'an the beast be to the fore, an the branks bide hale,' expect the humblest of your humble servants, and his dearest friend. We propose staying only half an hour, 'for ought we ken.' I could suffer the lash of misery eleven months in the year, were the twelfth to be composed of hours like yesternight. You are the soul of my enjoyment: all else is of the stuff and stocks of stones.

SYLVANDER.

No. XIV.

Thursday Morning, 7th February.

"Unlavish Wisdom never works in vain."

I HAVE been tasking my reason, Clarinda, why a woman who for native genius, poignant wit, strength of mind, generous sincerity of soul, and the sweetest female tenderness, is without a peer, and whose personal charms have few, very, very few parallels among her sex; why, or how she should fall to the blessed lot of a poor hairum scairum poet, whom Fortune had kept for her particular use, to wreak her temper on whenever she was in ill humour. One time I conjectured that, as Fortune is the most capricious jade ever known, she may have taken, not a fit of remorse, but a paroxysm of whim, to raise the poor devil out of the mire, where he had so often and so conveniently served her as a stepping stone, and given him the most glorious boon she ever had in her gift, merely for the maggot's sake, to see how his fool head and his fool heart will bear it. At other times I was vain enough to think that Nature, who has a great deal to say with Fortune, had given the coquettish goddess some such hint as, "Here is a paragon of female excellence, whose equal, in all my former compositions, I never was lucky enough to hit on, and despair of ever doing so again; you have cast her rather in the shades of life; there is a certain Poet of my making; among your frolics it would not be amiss to attach him to this master-piece of my hand, to give her that immortality among mankind which no woman of any age ever more deserved, and which few rhymesters of this age are better able to confer."

Evening, 9 o'clock.

I AM here, absolutely unfit to finish my letter—pretty hearty after a bowl, which has been constantly plied since dinner till this moment. I have been with Mr. Schetki, the musician, and he has set it* finely.——I have no distinct ideas of any thing, but that I have drunk your health twice to-night, and that you are all my soul holds dear in this world.

SYLVANDER.

No. XV.

Saturday Morning, 9th February.

THERE is no time, my Clarinda, when the conscious thrilling chords of Love and Friendship give such delight as in the pensive hours of what our favourite, Thomson, calls 'Philosophic Melancholy.' The sportive insects who bask in the sunshine of prosperity; or the worms that luxuriant crawl amid their ample wealth of earth—they need no Clarinda: they would despise Sylvander—if they durst. The family of Misfortune, a numerous groupe of brothers and sisters! they need a resting-place to their souls: unnoticed, often condemned by the world; in some degree, perhaps, condemned by themselves, they feel the full enjoyment of ardent love, delicate tender endearments, mutual esteem, and mutual reliance.

In this light I have often admired religion. In proportion as we are wrung with grief, or distracted with anxiety, the ideas of a compassionate Deity, an Almighty Protector, are doubly dear.

"'*Tis this*, my Friend, that streaks our morning bright;
'*Tis this* that gilds the horrors of our night."

I have been this morning taking a peep through, as Young finely says, 'the dark postern of time long elaps'd;' and, you will easily guess, 'twas a rueful prospect. What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple; what strength, what proportion in some parts! what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of mercies, and said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!"—— I rose, eased and strengthened. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man. "The future," said I to myself, "is still before me;" there let me

———'On reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man!'

"I have difficulties many to encounter," said I; "but they are not absolutely insuperable: and where is firmness of mind shewn but in exertion? mere declamation is bombastic rant." Besides, wherever I am, or in whatever situation I may be—

* ["Clarinda, mistress of my soul," &c.--See page 270.]

'————'Tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes, there must be joy!'

Saturday Night—half after Ten.

What luxury of bliss I was enjoying this time yesternight! My ever-dearest Clarinda, you have stolen away my soul: but you have refined, you have exalted it: you have given it a stronger sense of virtue, and a stronger relish for piety.—Clarinda, first of your sex, if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget you; if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul,

"May I be lost, no eye to weep my end;
And find no earth that's base enough to bury me!"

What trifling silliness is the childish fondness of the every-day children of the world! 'tis the unmeaning toying of the younglings of the fields and forests: but where Sentiment and Fancy unite their sweets; where Taste and Delicacy refine; where Wit adds the flavour, and Goodness gives strength and spirit to all, what a delicious draught is the hour of tender endearment!—Beauty and Grace, in the arms of Truth and Honour, in all the luxury of mutual love.

Clarinda, have you ever seen the picture realized? Not in all its very richest colouring.

Last night, Clarinda, but for one slight shade, was the glorious picture—

————Innocence
Look'd gaily smiling on; while rosy Pleasure
Hid young Desire amid her flowery wreath.
And pour'd her cup luxuriant; mantling high,
The sparkling heavenly vintage, Love and Bliss!

Clarinda, when a poet and poetess of Nature's making, two of Nature's noblest productions! when they drink together of the same cup of Love and Bliss—attempt not, ye coarser stuff of human nature, profanely to measure enjoyment ye never can know!—Good night, my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

No. XVI.

About 10th February.

MY EVER DEAREST CLARINDA,

I MAKE a numerous dinner party wait me while I read yours, and write this. Do not require that I should cease to love you, to adore you in my soul—'tis to me impossible—your peace and happiness are to me dearer than my soul—name the terms on which you wish to see me, to correspond with me, and you have them—I must love, pine, mourn, and adore in secret—this you must not deny me—you will ever be to me—

"Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart!"

I have not patience to read the puritanic scrawl.—Vile sophistry!—Ye heavens! thou God of nature! thou Redeemer of mankind! ye look down with approving eyes on a passion inspired by the purest flame, and guarded by truth, delicacy, and honour; but the half-inch soul of an unfeeling, cold-blooded, pitiful presbyterian bigot cannot forgive any thing above his dungeon bosom and foggy head.

Farewell; I'll be with you to-morrow evening—and be at rest in your mind—I will be yours in the way you think most to your happiness! I dare not proceed—I love, and will love you, and will with joyous confidence approach the throne of the almighty Judge of men, with your dear idea, and will despise the scum of sentiment, and the mist of sophistry.

SYLVANDER.

No. XVII.

Tuesday Evening, 12th Feb.

THAT you have faults, my Clarinda, I never doubted; but I knew not where they existed, and Saturday night made me more in the dark than ever. O Clarinda! why will you wound my soul, by hinting that last night must have lessened my opinion of you? True, I was "behind the scenes with you;" but what did I see? A bosom glowing with honour and benevolence; a mind ennobled by genius, informed and refined by education and reflection, and exalted by native religion, genuine as in the climes of heaven; a heart formed for all the glorious meltings of friendship, love, and pity. These I saw.—I saw the noblest immortal soul creation ever showed me.

I looked long, my dear Clarinda, for your letter; and am vexed that you are complaining. I have not caught you so far wrong as in your idea, that the commerce you have with *one* friend hurts you, if you cannot tell every tittle of it to *another*. Why have so injurious a suspicion of a good God, Clarinda, as to think that Friendship and Love, on the sacred inviolate principles of Truth, Honour, and Religion, can be any thing else than an object of His divine approbation?

I have mentioned, in some of my former scrawls, Saturday evening next. Do allow me to wait on you that evening. Oh, my angel! how soon must we part! and when can we meet again! I looked forward on the horrid interval with tearful eyes! What have I lost by not knowing you sooner! I fear, I fear my acquaintance with you is too short to make that *lasting* impression on your heart I could wish.

SYLVANDER.

No. XVIII.

"I AM distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan!" I have suffered, Clarinda, from your letter. My soul was in arms at the sad perusal: I dreaded that I had acted wrong. If I have robbed you of a friend, God forgive me! But, Clarinda, be comforted: let us raise the tone of our feelings a little higher and bolder. A fellow-creature who leaves us, who spurns us without just cause, though once our bosom friend—up with a little honest pride—let him go! How shall I comfort you, who am the cause of the injury? Can I wish that I had never seen you? that we had never met? No! I never will. But have I thrown you friendless? — there is almost distraction in that thought.

Father of mercies! against Thee often have I sinned; through Thy grace I will endeavour to do so no more! She who, Thou knowest, is dearer to me than myself, pour Thou the balm of peace into her past wounds, and hedge her about with Thy peculiar care, all her future days and nights! Strengthen her tender noble mind, firmly to suffer, and magnanimously to bear! Make me worthy of that friendship she honours me with. May my attachment to her be pure as devotion, and lasting as immortal life! O Almighty Goodness, hear me! Be to her at all times, particularly in the hour of distress or trial, a Friend and Comforter, a Guide and Guard.

> "How are Thy servants blest, O Lord,
> How sure is their defence!
> Eternal Wisdom is their guide,
> Their help, Omnipotence!"

Forgive me, Clarinda, the injury I have done you! To-night I shall be with you; as indeed I shall be ill at ease till I see you.

SYLVANDER.

No. XIX.

Two o'clock.

I JUST now received your first letter of yesterday, by the careless negligence of the penny-post. Clarinda, matters are grown very serious with us; then seriously hear me, and hear me, Heaven—I met you, my dear * * * *, by far the first of woman kind, at least to me; I esteemed, I loved you at first sight; the longer I am acquainted with you, the more innate amiableness and worth I discover in you.—You have suffered a loss, I confess, for my sake: but if the firmest, steadiest, warmest friendship; if every endeavour to be worthy of your friendship; if a love, strong as the ties of nature, and holy as the duties of religion—if all these can make any thing like a compensation for the evil I have occasioned you, if they be worth your acceptance, or can in the least add to your enjoyments — so help Sylvander, ye Powers above, in his hour of need, as he freely gives these all to Clarinda!

I esteem you, I love you as a friend; I admire you, I love you as a woman, beyond any one in all the circle of creation; I know I shall continue to esteem you, to love you, to pray for you, nay, to pray for myself for your sake.

Expect me at eight—And believe me to be ever, my dearest Madam, yours most entirely,

SYLVANDER.

No. XX.

February 14th, 1788.

WHEN matters, my love, are desperate, we must put on a desperate face—

> ——"On reason build resolve,
> That column of true majesty in man."

Or, as the same author finely says in another place—

> ——"Let thy soul spring up,
> And lay strong hold for help on him that made thee."

I am yours, Clarinda, for life. Never be discouraged at all this. Look forward; in a few weeks I shall be somewhere or other out of the possibility of seeing you: till then, I shall write you often, but visit you seldom. Your fame, your welfare, your happiness, are dearer to me than any gratification whatever. Be comforted, my love! the present moment is the worst: the lenient hand of Time is daily and hourly either lightening the burden, or making us insensible to the weight. None of these friends, I mean Mr. ——— and the other gentleman, can hurt your worldly support, and for their friendship, in a little time you will learn to be easy, and, by and by, to be happy without it. A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend—can any body that has these be said to be unhappy? These are yours.

To-morrow evening I shall be with you about eight; probably for the last time till I return to Edinburgh. In the meantime, should any of these two *unlucky* friends question you respecting me, whether I am *the man*, I do not think they are entitled to any information. As to their jealousy and spying, I despise them.—Adieu, my dearest Madam!

SYLVANDER.

No. XXI.

GLASGOW, *Monday Evening*, 9 *o'clock*, 17*th Feb.* 1788.

THE attraction of love, I find, is in an inverse proportion to the attraction of the New-

tonian philosophy. In the system of Sir Isaac, the nearer objects are to one another the stronger is the attractive force; in my system, every mile-stone that marked my progress from Clarinda awakened a keener pang of attachment to her.

How do you feel, my love? Is your heart ill at ease? I fear it.—God forbid that these persecutors should harass that peace which is more precious to me than my own. Be assured I shall ever think of you, muse on you, and, in my moments of devotion, pray for you. The hour that you are not in all my thoughts—"be that hour darkness! let the shadows of death cover it! let it not be numbered in the hours of the day!"

——"When I forget the darling theme,
Be my tongue mute! my fancy paint no more!
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!"

I have just met with my old friend, the ship captain; guess my pleasure—To meet you could alone have given me more. My brother William, too, the young saddler, has come to Glasgow to meet me; and here are we three spending the evening.

I arrived here too late to write by post; but I'll wrap half a dozen sheets of blank paper together, and send it by the fly, under the name of a parcel. You shall hear from me next post town. I would write you a long letter, but for the present circumstance of my friend.

Adieu, my Clarinda! I am just going to propose your health by way of grace-drink.

SYLVANDER.

No. XXII.

CUMNOCK, *2nd March*, 1788.

I HOPE, and am certain, that my generous Clarinda will not think my silence, for now a long week,* has been in any degree owing to my forgetfulness. I have been tossed about through the country ever since I wrote you; and am here, returning from Dumfries-shire, at an inn, the post-office of the place, with just so long time as my horse eats his corn, to write you. I have been hurried with business and dissipation almost equal to the insidious decree of the Persian monarch's mandate, when he forbade asking petition of God or man for forty days. Had the venerable prophet been as throng as I, he had not broken the decree, at least not thrice a-day.

I am thinking my farming scheme will yet hold. A worthy intelligent farmer, my father's friend and my own, has been with me on the spot: he thinks the bargain practicable. I am myself, on a more serious review of the lands, much better pleased with them. I won't mention this in writing to any body but you and ———. Don't accuse me of being fickle: I have the two plans of life before me, and I wish to adopt the one most likely to procure me independence. I shall be in Edinburgh next week. I long to see you: your image is omnipresent to me; nay, I am convinced I would soon idolatrize it most seriously; so much do absence and memory improve the medium through which one sees the much-loved object. To-night, at the sacred hour of eight, I expect to meet you—at the Throne of Grace. I hope, as I go home to night, to find a letter from you at the post-office in Mauchline. I have just once seen that dear hand since I left Edinburgh—a letter indeed which much affected me. Tell me, first of womankind! will my warmest attachment, my sincerest friendship, my correspondence, will they be any compensation for the sacrifices you make for my sake! If they will, they are yours. If I settle on the farm I propose, I am just a day and a half's ride from Edinburgh. We will meet—don't you say, "perhaps too often!"

Farewell, my fair, my charming Poetess! May all good things ever attend you! I am ever, my dearest Madam, yours,

SYLVANDER.

[* The letter about the 23d of February seems to be wanting.]

No. XXIII.

MOSSGIEL, *7th March*, 1788.

CLARINDA, I have been so stung with your reproach for unkindness, a sin so unlike me, a sin I detest more than a breach of the whole Decalogue, fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth articles excepted, that I believe I shall not rest in my grave about it, if I die before I see you. You have often allowed me the head to judge, and the heart to feel, the influence of female excellence. Was it not blasphemy, then, against your own charms, and against my feelings, to suppose that a short fortnight could abate my passion? You, my Love, may have your cares and anxieties to disturb you, but they are the usual recurrences of life; your future views are fixed, and your mind in a settled routine. Could not you, my ever dearest Madam, make a little allowance for a man, after long absence, paying a short visit to a country full of friends, relations, and early intimates? Cannot you guess, my Clarinda, what thoughts, what cares, what anxious forebodings, hopes and fears, must crowd the breast of the man of keen sensibility, when no less is on the tapis than his aim, his employment, his very existence, through future life?

Now that, not my apology, but my defence, is made, I feel my soul respire more easily. I know you will go along with me in my justifi-

cation—would to Heaven you could in my adoption too! I mean an adoption beneath the stars—an adoption where I might revel in the immediate beams of

"She, the bright sun of all her sex."

I would not have you, my dear Madam, so much hurt at Miss ———'s coldness. 'Tis placing yourself below her, an honour she by no means deserves. We ought, when we wish to be economists in happiness—we ought, in the first place, to fix the standard of our own character; and when, on full examination, we know where we stand, and how much ground we occupy, let us contend for it as property: and those who seem to doubt, or deny us what is justly ours, let us either pity their prejudices, or despise their judgment. I know, my dear, you will say this is self-conceit; but I call it self-knowledge. The one is the overweening opinion of a fool, who fancies himself to be what he wishes himself to be thought; the other is the honest justice that a man of sense, who has thoroughly examined the subject, owes to himself. Without this standard, this column in our own mind, we are perpetually at the mercy of the petulance, the mistakes, the prejudices, nay, the very weakness and wickedness of our fellow-creatures.

I urge this, my dear, both to confirm myself in the doctrine, which, I assure you, I sometimes need; and because I know that this causes you often much disquiet.—To return to Miss ——: she is most certainly a worthy soul, and equalled by very, very few, in goodness of heart. But can she boast more goodness of heart than Clarinda? Not even prejudice will dare to say so. For penetration and discernment, Clarinda sees far beyond her: to wit, Miss ——— dare make no pretence; to Clarinda's wit, scarcely any of her sex dare make pretence. Personal charms, it would be ridiculous to run the parallel. And for conduct in life, Miss ——— was never called out, either much to do or to suffer; Clarinda has been both; and has performed her part where Miss ——— would have sunk at the bare idea.

Away, then, with these disquietudes! Let us pray with the honest weaver of Kilbarchan —"Lord, send us a guid conceit o' oursel!" Or, in the words of the auld sang,

"Who does me disdain, I can scorn them again,
And I'll never mind any such foes."

There is an error in the commerce of intimacy * * * * * * * way of exchange, have not an equivalent to give us; and, what is still worse, have no idea of the value of our goods. Happy is our lot, indeed, when we meet with an honest merchant, who is qualified to deal with us on our own terms; but that is a rarity. With almost every body we must pocket our pearls, less or more, and learn, in the old Scotch phrase—'To gie sic like as we get.' For this reason one should try to erect a kind of bank or store-house in one's own mind; or, as the Psalmist says, 'We should commune with our own hearts, and be still.' This is exactly * * * * * * *

No. XXIV.*

I OWN myself guilty, Clarinda; I should have written you last week; but when you recollect, my dearest Madam, that yours of this night's post is only the third I have got from you, and that this is the fifth or sixth I have sent to you, you will not reproach me, with a good grace, for unkindness. I have always some kind of idea, not to sit down to write a letter, except I have time and possession of my faculties so as to do some justice to my letter; which at present is rarely my situation. For instance, yesterday I dined at a friend's at some distance; the savage hospitality of this country spent me the most part of the night over the nauseous potion in the bowl: this day—sick—head-ache—low spirit—miserable—fasting, except for a draught of water or small beer: now eight o'clock at night—only able to crawl ten minutes' walk into Mauchline to wait the post, in the pleasurable hope of hearing from the mistress of my soul.

But, truce with all this! When I sit down to write to you, all is harmony and peace. A hundred times a-day do I figure you, before your taper, your book, or work laid aside, as I get within the room. How happy have I been! and how little of that scantling portion of time, called the life of man, is sacred to happiness! I could moralize to-night like a death's head.—

"O what is life, that thoughtless wish of all!
A drop of honey in a draught of gall."

Nothing astonishes me more, when a little sickness clogs the wheels of life, than the thoughtless career we run in the hour of health. "None saith, where is God, my Maker, that giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of the air."

Give me, my Maker, to remember thee! Give me to act up to the dignity of my nature! Give me to feel "another's woe;" and continue with me that dear-lov'd friend that feels with mine!

* [This letter must have been written after his short visit to Edinburgh, when he concluded the bargain with Mr. Miller on the 13th March. He seems to have avoided seeing Clarinda on this occasion. Its date is probably about the 18th of March, 1788.]

The dignified and dignifying consciousness of an honest man, and the well-grounded trust in approving Heaven, are two most substantial sources of happiness.

* * * *

SYLVANDER.

No. XXV.*

1793.

BEFORE you ask me why I have not written you, first let me be informed of you *how* I shall write you? "In friendship," you say; and I have many a time taken up my pen to try an epistle of friendship to you; but it will not do: 'tis like Jove grasping a pop-gun, after having wielded his thunder. When I take up the pen, recollection ruins me. Ah! my ever dearest Clarinda! Clarinda!—what a host of memory's tenderest offspring crowd on my fancy at that sound! But I must not indulge that subject—you have forbid it.

I am extremely happy to learn that your precious health is re-established, and that you are once more fit to enjoy that satisfaction in existence, which health alone can give us. My old friend has indeed been kind to you. Tell him, that I envy him the power of serving you. I had a letter from him a while ago, but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients, that I could scarcely bear to read it, and have not yet answered it. He is a good honest fellow; and *can* write a friendly letter, which would do equal honour to his head and his heart; as a whole sheaf of his letters I have by me will witness: and though Fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach *now*, as she did *then*, when he first honoured me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever; and when I am laid in my grave, I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground which I have a right to.

You would laugh were you to see me where I am just now!—would to heaven you were here to laugh with me! though I am afraid that crying would be our first employment. Here am I set, a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine by me—as grave and as stupid as an owl—but, like that owl, still faithful to my old song. In confirmation of which, my dear Mrs. Mack, here is your good health! may the hand-waled benisons o' Heaven bless your bonnie face; and the wretch wha skellies at your weelfare, may the auld tinkler deil get him to clout his rotten heart! Amen.

You must know, my dearest Madam, that these now many years, wherever I am, in whatever company, when a married lady is called on as a toast, I constantly give you; but as your name has never passed my lips, even to my most intimate friend, I give you by the name of Mrs. Mack. This is so well known among my acquaintances that when my married lady is called for, the toast-master will say—"O, we need not ask him who it is—here's Mrs. Mack!" I have also, among my convivial friends, set on foot a round of toasts, which I call a round of Arcadian Shepherdesses; that is, a round of favourite ladies, under female names celebrated in ancient song; and then, you are my Clarinda. So, my lovely Clarinda, I devote this glass of wine to a most ardent wish for your happiness!

> In vain would Prudence, with decorous sneer,
> Point out a cens'ring world, and bid me fear;
> Above that world on wings of love I rise,
> I know its worst, and can that worst despise.
> "Wrong'd, injur'd, shunn'd, unpitied, unredrest,
> The mock'd quotation of the scorner's jest,"
> Let Prudence' direst bodements on me fall,
> Clarinda, rich reward! o'erpays them all! †

I have been rhyming a little of late, but I do not know if they are worth postage.—Tell me * * * * * * * *

SYLVANDER.

* [This letter was written after the Poet's marriage.]

† [The following recent account of Clarinda, written in Feb. 1837, appears in a note, to the Memoir of Lord Craig, in "Kay's Edinburgh Portraits," and will be read with interest by all admirers of the Poet:—"It may, perhaps, be worthy of notice that Lord Craig was cousin-german of Mrs. M'Lehose, the celebrated Clarinda of Burns, who is still living in Edinburgh, and was left an annuity by his Lordship. She is now nearly eighty years of age, but enjoys excellent health. We found her sitting in the parlour, with some papers on the table. Her appearance at first betrayed a little of that languor and apathy which attend age and solitude; but the moment she comprehended the object of our visit, her countenance, which even yet retains the lineaments of what Clarinda may be supposed to have been, became animated and intelligent. 'That,' said she, rising up and pointing to an engraving over the mantel-piece, 'is a likeness of my relative (Lord Craig) about whom you have been inquiring. He was the best friend I ever had! After a little conversation about his Lordship, she directed our attention to a picture of Burns, by Horsburgh, after Taylor, on the opposite wall of the apartment. 'You well know who that is—it was presented to me by Constable and Co., for having simply declared what I knew to be true, that the likeness was good.' We spoke of the correspondence betwixt the Poet and Clarinda, at which she smiled, and pleasantly remarked on the great change which the lapse of so many years had produced on her personal appearance. Indeed, any observation respecting Burns seemed to afford her pleasure; and she laughed at a little anecdote we told of him, which she had never before heard.

"Having prolonged our intrusion to the limits of courtesy, and conversed on various topics, we took leave of the venerable lady, highly gratified by the interview."]

ADDENDA.

Epitaph on W ——.

Rest gently, turf, upon his breast,
His chicken heart's so tender;
But rear huge castles on his head,
His skull will prop them under.

Poetical Epistle to Burns,

BY THE

REV. JOHN SKINNER.

The following verses were addressed to the Poet by the author of the popular song of *Tullochgorum;* and, it is hoped, they will be considered as an acceptable addition to this unique publication. In the Poet's own words, he looked upon them as the best poetical compliment he ever received.*

O! happy hour for ever mair,
That led my Chill up Cha'mers'† stair,
And gae him, what he values sair,
Sae braw a skance
Of Ayr-shire's dainty Poet there,
By lucky chance.

Waes my auld heart I was na wi' you,
Tho' worth your while I cou'd na gie you,
But sin' I had na hap to see you
Whan ye was North,
I'm bauld to send my service to you
Hyne o'er the Forth.

Sae proud 's I am that ye hae heard
O' my attempts to be a Bard,
And thinks my muse nae that ill far'd
Seil o' your face!
I wad na wiss for mair reward
Than your good grace.

Your bonnie bookie, line by line
I've read, and think it freely fine;
Indeed, I darena ca't *divine,*
As others might;
For that, ye ken, frae pen like mine,
Wad no be right.

But, by my sang, I dinna wonner,
That your admirers, mony hunner,
Let gowkit flieps pretend to scunner
And tak' offence;
Ye've naething said that looks like blunner
To fowks o' sense.

Your pawky "Dream" has humour in't,
I never saw the like in print;
The birth-day Laurit durst na mint
As ye hae done;
And yet there's nae a single hint
Can be mista'en.

Your "Mailie," and your guid "Auld Mare,"
And "Hallow-even's" funny cheer;
There's nane that's read them, far or near,
But reezes Robie,
And thinks them as diverting gear
As Yorick's Tobie.

But, O! the weel tauld "Cotter's Night"
Is what gies me the maist delight:
A piece sae finish'd, and sae tight,
There's nane o's a'
Cou'd preachment-timmer cleaner dight
In kirk nor ha'.

But what need this or that to name?
It's own'd by a' there's no a theme
Ye tak' in hand, but's a' the same,
And nae ane o' them
But weel may challenge a' the fame
That we can gi' them.

For me, I heartily allow you
The wald o' praise sae justly due you:
And but a Plowman! Sall I true you?
Gin it be sae,
A miracle I will avow you,
Deny't wha may.

What recks a leash o' classic lair,
Thro' seven years, and some guide mair;
Whan plowman-lad, wi' nature bare
Sae far surpasses
A' we can do wi' study sair
To climb Parnassus.

* [See his letter to the Rev. John Skinner, page 632.]

† [The Printer of the Aberdeen Journal, in whose house Mr. Skinner first saw Burns's Poems.]

But, thanks to praise, ye're i' your prime,
And may chant on this lang lang time;
For, let me tell you, 'tware a crime
To haud your tongue,
Wi' sic a knack's ye hae at rhyme,
And you sae young.

Ye ken it's nae for ane like me
To be sae droll as ye can be:
But ony help that I can gie,
Tho't be but sma',
Your least command, I'se let you see,
Sall gar me draw.

An hour or twa, by hook or crook,
And may be three, some orrow owk
That I can spare frae haly buik,
(For that's my hobby,)
I'll steal awa' to some by-neuk,
And crack wi' Robie.

Wad ye but only crack again,
Just what ye like, in ony strain,
I'll tak' it kind; for, to be plain,
I do expect it;
And, mair than that, I'll no be fain
Gin ye neglect it.

To Linshart, gin my hame ye spier,
Whare I hae hefft near fifty year,
'Twill come in course, ye need na fear;
The pairt's weel ken't;
And postage, be it cheap or dear,
I'll pay content.

Now, after a', hae me exqueez'd
For wishing nae to be refeez'd;
I dinna covet to be reez'd
For this fiel lilt;
But fiel or wise, gin ye be pleas'd,
Ye're welcome till't.

Sae, canty Plowman, fare ye weel;
Lord bless ye lang wi' hae and heil,
And keep you aye the honest chiel
That ye hae been;
Syne lift you to a better biel
Whan this is dane!

POSTSCRIPT.

This auld Scots muse I've courted lang,
And spar'd nae pains to win her;
Dowff tho' I be in rustic sang,
I'm no a late beginner.

But now auld age taks dowie turns,
Yet troth, as I'm a sinner,
I'll aye be fond o' Robie Burns,
While I can sign

John Skinner.

Linshart, Sept. 25th, 1787.

Verses

ON THE DEATH OF BURNS.

BY

Mrs. GRANT, OF LAGGAN.

What adverse fate awaits the tuneful train!
Has Otway died, and Spenser liv'd in vain?
In vain has Collins, Fancy's pensive child,
Pour'd his lone plaint by Arun's windings wild?
And Savage, on Misfortune's bosom bred,
Bar'd to the howling storm his houseless head?
Who gentle Shenstone's fate can hear unmov'd,
By virtue, elegance, and genius lov'd?
Yet, pensive wand'ring o'er his native plain,
His plaints confess'd he lov'd the Muse in vain;
Chill Penury invades his favourite bower,
Blasts every scene, and withers every flower;
His warning Muse to Prudence turn'd her strain,
But Prudence sung to thoughtlss bards in vain;
Still restless Fancy drives them headlong on,
With dreams of wealth, and friends, and laurels won—
On Ruin's brink they sleep, and wake undone.

And see where Caledonia's Genius mourns,
And plants the holly round the grave of Burns:
But late its "polish'd leaves and berries red
Play'd graceful round the rural Poet's head,"
And, while with manly force and native fire
He wak'd the genuine Caledonian lyre,
Tweed's severing flood exulting heard her tell,
Not Roman wreaths the holly could excel;
Not Tiber's stream along Campania's plain,
More pleas'd convey'd the gay Horatian strain;
Than bonny Doon, or fairy-haunted Ayr,
That wont his rustic melody to share,
Resound along their banks the pleasing theme,
Sweet as their murmurs, copious as their stream;
And Ramsay, once the Horace of the north,
Who charm'd with various strains the listening Forth,
Bequeath'd to him the shrewd peculiar art
To Satire nameless graces to impart,
To wield her weapons with such sportive ease
That, while they wound, they dazzle and they please.

But when he sung to the attentive plain,
The humble virtues of the Patriarch swain,
His evening worship, and his social meal,
And all a parent's pious heart can feel;
To genuine worth we bow submissive down,
And wish the cotter's lowly shed our own;
With fond regard our native land we view;
Its cluster'd hamlets, and its mountains blue,
Our "virtuous populace," a nobler boast
Than all the wealth of either India's coast.
Yet while our hearts with admiration burn,
Too soon we learn that "man was made to mourn."
The independent wish, the taste refin'd,
The energies of the superior mind,
And Feeling's generous pangs, and Fancy's glow,
And all that liberal Nature could bestow,
To him profusely given, yet given in vain;
Misfortune aids and points the stings of pain.

How blest, when wand'ring by his native Ayr,
He "woo'd the willing muse," unknown to care;
But when fond admiration spread his name,
A candidate for fortune and for fame,
In evil hour he left the tranquil shade,
Where Youth and Love with Hope and Fancy play'd;
Yet rainbow-colours gild the novel scene,
Deceitful fortune sweetly smil'd like JEAN;
Now courted oft by the licentious gay,
With them through devious paths behold him stray.
The opening rose conceals the latent thorn,
Convivial hours prolong'd awake the morn;
Even Reason's sacred power is drown'd in wine,
And Genius lays her wreath on Folly's shrine.
Too sure, alas! the world's unfeeling train
Corrupt the simple manners of the swain;
The blushing Muse indignant scorns his lays,
And Fortune frowns, and honest Fame decays;
Till low on earth he lays his sorrowing head,
And sinks untimely 'midst the vulgar dead.

Yet while for him, belov'd, admir'd, in vain,
Thus fond Regret pours forth her plaintive strain;
While Fancy, Feeling, Taste, their griefs rehearse,
And deck with artless tears his mournful hearse,
See Cunning, Dullness, Ignorance, and Pride,
Exulting o'er his grave, in triumph ride;
And boast "though Genius, Humour, Wit, agree,"
Cold selfish Prudence far excels the three; [go,
Nor think, while grovelling on the earth they
How few can mount so high to fall so low.

Thus Vandals, Goths, and Huns exulting come,
T' insult the ruins of majestic Rome;
But ye who honour Genius—sacred beam!
From holy light a bright ethereal gleam,
Ye whom his happier verse has taught to glow,
Now to his ashes pay the debt you owe—
Draw Pity's veil o'er his concluding scene,
And let the stream of bounty flow for JEAN.

The mourning matron and her infant train,
Will own you did not love the Muse in vain;
While sympathy with liberal hand appears,
To aid the orphans' wants, and dry the widow's tears.

Song

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH-DAY OF ROBERT BURNS.

Written for the "CALEDONIAN SOCIETY," London, 1840,

BY ANDREW PARK.

BRAVE Scotland—Freedom's throne on Earth!
A bumper to thy glory!
This day thy matchless Bard had birth,
So fam'd in song and story!
Where'er thy mountain-sons may stray,
Thou'st thrown thy magic round them,
And on this ever-hallow'd day
In kindred love hast bound them.

He nobly walk'd behind his plough,
And gaz'd entranc'd on nature;
While genius grac'd his lofty brow,
And play'd in every feature!
For then, inspir'd by glowing songs,
Of "Bruce," or "Highland Mary,"
The minstrel-birds, in joyous throngs,
Around their Bard would tarry!

But wae's my heart! he sings nae mair
In strains o' joy or sorrow;
Though on the bonny banks o' Ayr,
His spirit smiles each morrow!
And Scotia's muse—enthron'd on high—
The great, the gentle-hearted!
Sits with the tear-drop in her eye,
And mourns her Bard departed!

O sacred land of gallant men!
Of maidens unassuming!
Who dwell obscure by loch and glen,
Where still the thistle's blooming;
How well has Burns rehears'd your praise,
Among your cloud-capt mountains,
In never-dying, tuneful lays,
Pure as your native fountains!

Then fill the sparkling goblet high,
And let no discord stain it;
Let joy illume each manly eye,
While to the dregs we drain it!
To Burns! to Burns! the King of Song!
Whose lyre shall charm all ages!
Mirth, wisdom, love, and satire strong,
Adorn his deathless pages!

THE

BROAD SWORDS OF OLD SCOTLAND.

BY

J. G. Lockhart, Esq.

Air—*The Roast beef of Old England.*

Now there's peace on the shore and there's calm on the sea,
Fill a glass to the heroes whose swords kept us free,
Right descendants of WALLACE, MONTROSE and DUNDEE.
O, the broad swords of Old Scotland,
O, the old Scottish broad swords.

Old SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY, the good and the brave,—
Let him flee from our board, let him sleep with the slave,
Whose libation falls slow as we honour his grave.
O, the broad swords, &c.

Tho' he died not, like him, amid Victory's roar,
Tho' disaster and gloom wove his shroud on the shore,
Not the less we remember the spirit of MOORE.
O, the broad swords, &c.

Yea, a place with the fallen the living shall claim,
We'll entwine in one wreath every glorious name,
The GORDON, the RAMSAY, the HOPE, and the GRAHAM.
O, the broad swords, &c.

Count the rocks of the Spey, count the groves of the Forth,
Count the stars in the clear cloudless sky of the North,
Then go blazen their numbers, their names, and their worth.
O, the broad swords, &c.

The highest in splendour, the humblest in place,
Stand united in honour as kindred in race,
For the private is brother in blood to his Grace.
O, the broad swords, &c.

Even a Huntley will joy that a bumper hath flow'd
To himself, and the lowest e'er crimson'd the sod,
When he drew by his side for his king and his God,
The broad sword of Old Scotland.
O, the old Scottish broad swords.

Then sacred to all and to each let it be;
Fill a glass to the heroes whose swords kept us free,
Right descendants of WALLACE, MONTROSE and DUNDEE.
O, the broad swords, &c.*

* The above truly national and heart-stirring song, which is here given as a companion to the noble Ode of "SCOTS WHA HAE WI' WALLACE BLED," was composed for the Mess of the (Edinburgh) Mid-Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry, about the year 1822: Mr. Thomson's attention being called to it, he was delighted on hearing it sung by the late Mr. Peter Hill, of Edinburgh, and requested, and got permission, to publish it in his collection of "Scottish Melodies,"—that splendid work to which Burns contributed so many of his best songs.

GLOSSARY.

THE explanation of Scottish words by Burns in his brief, but valuable, glossary annexed to the earlier editions of his poems, is now extended to words and phrases contained in his songs and other posthumous pieces. All his definitions have been scrupulously retained, and to these have been added such illustrations from poetic and proverbial lore as cannot fail being acceptable even to readers intimate with the varied dialect of the north. The Scottish dialect, with which the English language of much of our verse is sprinkled, sometimes defies even description: these expressive northern words were only adopted because the language of the south, though rich to overflowing, had nothing to offer as an equivalent. This is peculiarly the case with Burns: his works abound with words, and phrases, and allusions, which can neither be translated nor explained in their native spirit and force.

Yet some have thought it strange that Burns should be as popular in the south as in the north: this is not at all wondered at by those who are familiar with the very varied and forcible dialects of the English provinces. The truth is that the Scottish language is essentially Saxon, coloured a little with the Celtic, and as such is as well, perhaps better, understood in one half of the English counties than the scholastic language of Johnson and Gibbon.

Burns introduces his Glossary with these directions. "The *ch* and *gh* have always the guttural sound. The sound of the English diphthong *oo* is commonly spelled *ou*. The French *u*, a sound which often occurs in the Scottish language, is marked *oo*, or *ui*. The *a*, in genuine Scottish words, except when forming a diphthong, or followed by an *e* mute after a single consonant, sounds generally like the broad English *a* in *wall*. The Scottish diphthong *ae* always, and *ea* very often, sound like the French *e* masculine. The Scottish diphthong *ey* sounds like the Latin *ei*."

A

A'. All.
"And puts a' nature in a jovial mood." *Ramsay.*

Aback. Away, aloof, back-wards.

Abeigh. At a shy distance.
"Gaur'd puir Duncan stan' abeigh." *Burns.*

Aboon. Above, up.
"Aboon the town upon the southwart side."
Blind Harry.

Abread. Abroad, in sight, to publish.
"An' spread your beauties a' abread." *Burns.*

Abreed. In breadth.

Adle. Putrid water.

Ae. One.
"Ae man's meat's anither man's poison."
Scots Proverb.

Aff. Off.

Aff-loof. Off-hand, extempore, without premeditation.
To shoot aff-loof is to shoot without a rest.
"E'en wi' a canty tale he'd tell aff-loof."
Ramsay.

Afore. Before.
"Better be afore at a burial than ahin at a bridal." *Scots Saying.*

Aft. Aften. Oft. Often.
"An' pried it aft, as ye may trow." *Macneil.*
"Aften I have young sportive gilpies seen."
Ramsay.

Agley. Off the right line, wrong, awry.
"The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley." *Burns.*

Aiblins. Perhaps.
"The man may aiblins tyne a stot," *Montgomery.*

Ain. Own.
"This is no my ain house,
I ken by the biggin' o't." *Scots Song.*

Airn. Iron, a tool of that metal, a mason's chisel.
"Thraw me thro' my airns, quo' the gude Gordon,
They cost the town o' Dumfries fu' dear."
Old Ballad.

Airles. Earnest money.

Airl-penny. A silver penny given as airles or hiring money.
"Your proffer o' luves an' airl-pennie." *Burns.*

Agee. On one side.
"Whilk pensylie he wears a thought agee." *Ramsay.*

Airt. Quarter of the heaven, point of the compass.
"And under what *airt* of the heaven so high."
G. Douglas.

Aith. An oath.
"He swore the great aith bodily." *Wyntown.*

Aits. Oats.
"Where aits are fine an' sald by kind."
Scottish Song.

Aiver. An old horse.
"Suppose I were ane auld yaud aiver," *Dunbar.*

Aizle. A hot cinder, an ember of wood.
"She noticed na an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron." *Burns.*

Alake. Alas.
"O dool and alake!" an exclamation of sorrow.

Alane. Alone.
"And hald his heritage hir alane." *Wyntown.*

Akwart. Awkward, athwart.
"As he glaid by akwart he couth him ta."
Blind Harry.

Amaist. Almost.
"A midge is as big as a mountain a' but amaist."
Scots Saying.

Amang. Among.
"I met four chaps yon birks amang." *Boswell.*

An'. And, if.
"And o', quo' he, an' I were as free." *King Jas. V.*

Ane. Ance. One. Once.
"But giff it war ane or twa." *Barbour.*

Anent. Over-against, concerning, about.

Anither. Another.
"Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither." *Burns.*

Ase. Ashes of wood, remains of a hearth fire.
"Remember that thou art but ase." *Dunbar.*

Asklent. Asquint, aslant.

Asteer. Abroad, stirring in a lively manner.
"My mither she's a scauldin' jaud,
Hauds a' the house asteer." *Old Song.*

Aqueesh. Between.
"Aqueesh twa queans I kenna how to look."
Scottish Rhyme.

Athout. Athwart.
Attour. Moreover, beyond, besides.
"Attour the king shall remain in keeping."
Pitscottie.
Aught. Possession, as "in a' my aught," in all my possession.
"I hae the Bible, an' there's no a better book in a' yere aught." *Scots Saying.*
Auld. Old.
Auld-farran'. Auld farrant, sagacious, prudent, cunning.
"These people right auld-farran' will be laith." *Ramsay.*
Auld lang syne. Olden time, days of other years.
Ava. At all.
"She neither kent spinning nor carding,
Nor brewing nor baking ava." *Ross.*
Awa. Away, begone.
"Awa, quo' she, the diel's owre grit wi' you."
Ramsay.
Awfu'. Awful.
"An awfu' scythe out owre ae shouther."
Burns.
Auld-shoon. Old shoes, literally; a discarded lover, metaphorically.
"Ye may tell the coof that gets her,
That he gets but my auld shoon."
Scots Song.
Aumos. Gift to a beggar; thus described in an old song:
"A handfu' o' meal, a pickle o' grotts,
Cauld parritch, or herring-bree."
Scots Song.
Aumos-dish. A beggar's dish in which the aumos is received.
"An' she held up her greedy gab,
Just like an aumos-dish." *Burns.*
Awn. } The beard of barley, oats, &c.
Awnie. } Bearded.
"And aits set up their awnie horn." *Burns.*
Ayent. Beyond.
"The auld wife ayont the fire,
She died for lack o' sneeshing." *Ross.*

B

Ba', Ball.
"She saw three bonnie boys playing at the ba'." *Scots Song.*
Backets. Ash-boards, as pieces of backet for removing ashes.
Backlins. Comin', coming back, returning.
"And backlins frae the bull to shift." *A. Scott.*
Back-yett. Private gate.
"An' thro' the back-yett, an' let naebody see." *Old Song.*
Baide. Endured, did stay.
"But teuchley doure it baide an unco' bang."
Burns.
Baggie. The belly.
"Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie."
Burns.
Bainie. Having large bones, stout.
Bairn. A child.
"As glad tythings unto my child and bairn."
G. Douglas.
Bairntime. A family of children, a brood.
Baith. Both.
"Baith sceptre, sword, crown, and ring."
Wyntown.
Ballets, ballants. Ballads.
"An' it were about Robin Hood, or some o' Davie Lyndsay's ballants." *Scott.*
Ban. To swear.
"Our lass Bess may curse and ban."
Old Song.
Bane. Bone.
"What's bred in the bane's ill to come out o' the flesh." *Scots Proverb.*
Bang. To beat, to strive, to excel.
"E'en ony rose her cheeks did bang."
Davidson.
Bannock. Flat, round, soft cake.
"Bannocks o' bear-meal, bannocks o' barley."
Old Song.
Bardie. Diminutive of bard.
"He was your bardie monie a year." *Burns.*
Bare-fit. Bare-footed.
"The lasses skelpin bare-fit thrang. *Burns.*
Barley-bree. Barley-broo, liquor of barley, malt-liquor.
Barmie. Of, or like, barm, yeasty.
"Quhilk boils your barmy brain." *Montgomery.*
Batch. A crew, a gang.
"A batch o' wabster lads." *Galt.*
Batts. Botts.
"The bleiring bats an' benshaw." *Polwart.*
Bauckie-bird. The bat.
"Or wavering like the bauckie-bird." *Burns.*
Baudrons. A cat.
"And whyles a voice on baudrons cried."
Old Ballad.
Bauld. Bold.
"My een are bauld an' dwall on a place."
Scots Song.
Bawk. A piece of unploughed land among corn.
Baws'nt. Having a white stripe down the face.
"And sauld your crummock and her baws'nt quey." *Ramsay.*
Be. To let be, to give over, to cease.
"He's aye woo wooing, and he'll never let me be." *Scots Song.*
Beets. Boots.
"What maks yere master wear beets, man?—Because he has nae sheen."
Aberdeen Saying.
Bear. Barley.
Bearded-bear. Barley with its bristly head.
"Amang the bearded barley." *Scots Song.*
Beastie. Diminute of beast.
"Wee sleekit, cowrin', timorous beastie."
Burns.
Beet, beek. To add fuel to a fire, to bask.
"An' beek the house baith but an' ben."
Ramsay.
Beld. Bald.
"An' tho' his brow be beld aboon." *Burns.*
Belyve. By and by, presently, quickly.
"Belyve Eneas membris schuke for cauld."
G. Douglas.
Ben. Into the spence or parlour.
"Spredand fra thauk to thauk, baith but and ben." *G. Douglas.*
Benmost-bore. The remotest hole, the innermost recess.
"And seek the benmost-bore." *Burns.*
Bethankit. Grace after meat.
"The auld gudeman just like to rive
Bethankit hums." *Burns.*
Beuk. A book.
Bicker. A kind of wooden dish, a short rapid race.
"And bang'd about the nectar bicker."
Evergreen.
Bickering. Careering, hurrying with quarrelsome intent.
"In glittering show and the once bickering stream." *Davidson.*
Birnie. Birnie ground is where thick heath has been burnt, leaving the birns, or unconsumed stalks, standing up sharp and stubley.
Dumfries-shire.
Bie, or *bield.* Shelter, a sheltered place, the sunny nook of a wood.
"Better a wee bush than nae bield." *Scots Prov.*
Bien. Wealthy, plentiful.
"And thou in berne and byre so bene and big."
Henrysone.
Big, Biggit. To build—built.
"They biggit a house on yon burn brae." *Old Song.*
Biggin'. Building, a house.
"I hae house a biggin." *Old Song.*
"By some auld houlet-haunted biggin." *Burns.*
Bill. A bull.
"An' like a bill amang the kye." *Ramsay.*
Billie. A brother, a young fellow, a companion.
"Now fear ye na my billie, quo' he." *Old Ballad.*
Bing. A heap of grain, potatoes, &c.
"Quhen they depulye the mekil bing of quhete."
G. Douglas.
Birdie-cocks. Young cocks, still belonging to the brood.
"And our guid wife's wee birdie-cocks." *Burns.*
Birk. Birch.
"Amang the birks sae blythe an' gay."
T. Cunningham.
Birkie. A clever, a forward conceited fellow.
"Spoke like yoursel', auld birkie never fear."
Ramsay.
Birken-shaw. Birchen-wood shaw, a small wood.
Birring. The noise of partridges when they rise.
"Ane gret staff sloung berrand with felloune wieght." *Gaw. Douglas.*

Birses. Bristles,
"The rough birsis on the briest and criest."
Gaw. Douglas.

Bit. Crisis, nick of time, place.
"Just as I was coming up the bit I saw a man afore me." *Scott.*

Bizz. A bustle, to buzz.
"An' singe wi' hair-devouring bizz." *Fergusson.*

Black's the grun'. As black as the ground.
"Nae wonder he's as black's the grun'." *Burns.*

Blastie. A shrivelled dwarf, a term of contempt, full of mischief.
"An' how the blasties did behave." *Train.*

Blastit. Blasted.

Blate. Bashful, sheepish.
"We Phenicianis nane sae blate breistis has." *Douglas.*

Blather. Bladder.

Blaud. A flat piece of anything, to slap.
"He was like to ding the pulpit in blads." *Melvill.*

Blaudin-shower. A heavy driving rain; a blauding signifies a beating.
"For blaudin' o' the tailor sae." *Cock.*

Blaw. To blow, to boast; "blaw i' my lug," to flatter.
"Keep your temper sweetly, an' neither brag nor blaw." *Duff.*

Bleerit. Bedimmed, eyes hurt with weeping.

Bleer't and blin'. Bleered and blind.

Bleer my een. Dim my eyes.
"I bleer my een wi' greetin'." *Old Song.*

Bleezing, bleeze. Blazing, flame.
"An' of bleeched birns pat on a canty bleeze." *Ramsay.*

Blellum. Idle talking fellow.
"A bletherin', blust'ring, drunken blellum." *Burns.*

Blether. } To talk idly; talking idly.
Bleth'rin. }
"For an' they winna haud their blether." *Hamilton.*

Blink. A little while, a smiling look, to look kindly, to shine by fits.
"Blink owre the burn, sweet Betty." *Old Song.*

Blinker. A term of contempt, it means too a lively engaging girl.

Blinkin'. Smirking, smiling with the eyes, looking lovingly.
"She is a bonnie lassie wi' a blythe blinking ee." *Old Song.*

Blirt and blearie. Out-burst of grief, with wet eyes.
"The lassie lost her silken snood,
Which cost her many a blirt and blearie." *Old Song.*

Blue-gown. One of those beggars who get annually, on the king's birth-day, a blue cloak or gown with a badge.

Bluid. Blood.

Bluntie. Snivelling.

Blype. A shred, a large piece.
"Till skin in blypes cam haurlin." *Burns.*

Bobbit. The obeisance made by a lady.
"O when she cam ben she bobbit fu' low." *Old Song.*

Bock, bocked. To vomit, to gush intermittently, gushed.
"He gat it owre
"Without a host, a bock, or glow'r." *Cleland.*

Bodle. A copper coin of the value of two pennies Scots, or one third of an English penny.
"I was na worth a single bodle." *Scots Song.*

Bogie. A small morass.

Bogles. Spirits, hobgoblins.

Bonnie, or *bonny.* Handsome, beautiful.
"She's a very bonnie lassie, an' you be she." *Old Song.*

Bonnock. A kind of thick cake of bread, a small jannock or loaf made of oatmeal. See bannock.

Boord. A board.
"The Letter-gae o' holy rhyme sat up at our boord head." *Ramsay.*

Bore. A hole in a wall, a cranny.
"An' into holes and bores thaim hid." *Burel.*

Boortree. The shrub elder, planted much of old in hedges of barn-yards and gardens.
"An' sughin through the boortrees comin'." *Burns.*

Boost. Behoved, must needs, wilfulness.

Botch, blotch. An angry tumour.

Bousing. Drinking, making merry with liquor.

Bouk, bowk. Body.
"I wadna gie his wee finger for your hale bouk." *Scots Saying.*

Bow-kail. Cabbage.

Bow-hought. Out-knee'd, crooked at the knee joint. We say bow-beaked of a hawk.
"A short hought man, but fu' o' pride." *Ramsay.*

Bowt, bowlt. Bended, crooked.
"A runt was like a sow tail, sae bowt that night." *Burns.*

Brachens. Fern.
"It's either the tod or the bracken bush." *Scots Proverb.*

Brae. A declivity, a precipice, the slope of a hill.
"Twa men I saw ayont yon brae." *Ross.*

Braid. Broad.
"The king has written a braid letter." *Old Ballad.*

Braik. An instrument for rough-dressing flax, a kind of harrow.
"A braik for hemp that she may rub." *Watson.*

Brainge. To run rashly forward, to churn violently.
"She gied the kirn an angry brainge an' spoilt the butter." *Scots Saying.*

Braing't. "The horse brainget," plunged and fretted in the harness.

Brak. Broke, became insolvent.
"He brak wi' the fou' hand"—spoken of a dishonest debtor.

Branks. A kind of wooden curb for horses
"Gif the beast be to the fore and the branks bide hale."

Brankie. Gaudy.
"Whare hae ye been sae brankie o'." *Scots Song.*

Brash. A sudden illness.
"A brash, a slight fit of sickness." *Sinclair.*

Brats. Coarse clothes, rags, &c.
"He desires no more in the world but a bit and a brat." *Scots Saying.*

Brattle. A short race, hurry, fury.
"Giff our twa herds come brattling down the brae." *Ramsay.*

Braw. Fine, handsome.
"Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes." *Old Song.*

Brawlys, or *brawlie.* Very well, finely, heartily, bravely.
"I win but six-pennie a' the day lang,
An' I spent at night fu' brawlie." *Old Song.*

Braxies. Diseased sheep.
"While moorland herds like gude fat braxies." *Burns.*

Breastie. Diminutive of breast.

Breastit. Did spring up or forward; the act of mounting a horse.
"She breasts the billows," men say of a ship when she has a fair wind.

Brechame. A horse-collar.
"Ane brechame and two brochis fyne." *Bannatyne Poems.*

Breckan. Fern.

Breef. An invulnerable or irresistible spell.
"The breef was out; 'twas him it doomed
The mermaid's face to see." *Finlay.*

Breeks. Breeches.

Brent. Bright, clear; "a brent brow," a brow high and smooth.
"For his blyth browis brent and athir ane." *G. Douglas.*

Brewin'. Brewing, gathering.
"He saw mischief a brewin'." *Burns.*

Bree, brie. Juice, liquid.
"An' plyed their cutties at the smervy bree." *Ramsay.*

Brig. A bridge.
"Brig o' Balgounie, black be yere fa'." *Scots Saying.*

Brunstane. Brimstone.
"He stole his whig-spunks tipt wi' brunstane." *Jacobite Reliques.*

Brisket. The breast, the bosom.
"White legs an' brisket bare." *Morison.*

Brither. A brother.
"My brither Jock an' anither gentleman." *Scots Saying.*

Brock. A badger.
"Whan ye have done tak hame the brok." *Bannatyne.*

Brogue. A hum, a trick.
"And played on man a cursed brogue." *Burns.*

Broo. Broth, liquid, water.
"What's no i' the bag will be i' the broo," said the Highlandman when he dirked the haggis.

Brose. A kind of pottage made by pouring boiling water or broth on oatmeal, which is stirred while the liquor is poured.

Broose. A race at country weddings; he who first reaches the bridegroom's house on returning from church wins the broose.

Browst. Ale, as much malt liquor as is brewed at a time.
"Ye drink o' yere ain browst," ye suffer for your own mischief.

Brugh. A burgh.
"A royal brugh," a royal borough.

Bruilzie. A broil, combustion.
"For drinking, an' dancing, an' bruilzies." *Ross.*

Brunt. Did burn, burnt.
"Turn out the brunt side o' my shin." *Ramsay.*

Brust. To burst, burst.
"The fiery sparkes brusting from his een."
G. Douglas.

Buchan-bullers. The boiling of the sea among the rocks on the coast of Buchan.

Buckskin. An inhabitant of Virginia.

Buff our beef. Thrash us soundly, give us a beating behind and before.

Bught. A pen.

Bughtin-time. The time of collecting the sheep in the pens to be milked.

Buirdly. Stout made, broad built.
"He's mair buirdly i' the back than i' the brain."
Scots Saying.

Bum-clock. The humming beetle, that flies in the summer evenings.
"The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone." *Burns.*

Bummin'. Humming as bees, buzzing.
"The cucking of cuckoos, the bumbling of bees."
Urquhart.

Bummle, bummler. To blunder—a drone, an idle fellow, one whose noise is greater than his work.
"The loudest bummler's no the best bee."
Scots Saying.

Bunker. A window seat.
"Ithers frae aff the bunkers sank,
Wi' een like collops scored." *Ramsay.*

Burdies. Diminutive of birds.

Bure. Did bear.

Burn, burnie. Water, a rivulet, a small stream which is heard as it runs.
"A flowrie brae by which a burnie trotted."
Scots Song.

Burnewin'. Burn the wind, a blacksmith.
The bellows blow wind into the fire—hence burn the wind.

Burr-thistle. The thistle of Scotland.
"The rough burr-thistle spreading wide." *Burns.*

Buskie, buskit, busks. Bushy, dressed, dresses.
"A bonnie bride is soon busket." *Scots Proverb.*

Buskit-nest. An ornamented residence.

Buss. Shelter.

Busle. A bustle, to bustle.

But, bot. Without.
"Touch not a cat but a glove." *Scots Proverb.*

But and ben. The country kitchen and parlour.
"Mony blenkis ben our the but fall far sittis."
Dunbar.

By himself. Lunatic, distracted, beside himself.

Byke. A bee hive, a wild bee nest.
"In herrying o' a bee byke I hae got a stang."
Old Song.

Byre. A cow-house, a sheep-pen.
"He ettled the bairn in at the breast;
The bolt flew owre the byre." *King James I.*

C

Ca', ca't. To call, to name, to drive.
"Ca' the yowes to the knowes." *Scots Song.*
Called, driven, calved.
"While new ca't kye rowte at the stake."
Burns.

Cadger. A carrier.
"Here ride cadgers, creels and a'." *Nursery Song.*

Cadie, or Caddie. A person, a young fellow, a public messenger.
"Where will I get a little foot page?
Where will I get a caddie?" *Old Song.*

Caff. Chaff.
"King's caff is better than other folks corn."
Scots Proverb.

Caird. A tinker, a maker of horn spoons, and teller of fortunes.
"Hegh, sirs, what cairds an' tinklers." *Fergusson.*

Cairn. A loose heap of stones, a rustic monument.
"I will add a stone to your cairn." *Scots Saying.*

Calf-ward. A small enclosure for calves.

Calimanco. A certain kind of cotton cloth worn by ladies.
"Her wat o' calimanco." *Forbes.*

Callan. A boy.
"Far-famed and celebrated Allan,
Renowned Ramsay, cantie callan." *Hamilton.*

Caller. Fresh, sound, refreshing.
"The callour air penetrative and pure."
G. Douglas.

Callet. A loose woman, a follower of a camp.
"Here's to ragged brats and callets." *Burns.*

Cannie. Gentle, mild, dexterous.
"Ca' cannie lad, yere but the new-come cooper."
Scots Saying.

Cannilie. Dexterously, gently.
"She wad a reined in as cannilie as a cadger's pony." *Scott.*

Cantie, or Canty. Cheerful, merry.
"I'll be mair canty wi't, an' neer cry dool."
Ramsay.

Cantraip. A charm, a spell.
——"a witch that for sma' price
Can cast her cantraips and gie me advice."
Ramsay.

Cap-stane. Cope-stone, topmost stone of the building.
"Has laid the cap-stane o' them a'." *A. Wilson.*

Car. A rustic cart with or without wheels.
"Tumbler-cars, so called to distinguish them from trail-cars, both of which were in common use." *Lockhart.*

Carl, Carle. An old man.
"A pawkie auld carle cam' owre the lea."
K. James V.

Careerin'. Moving cheerfully.

Carl-hemp. The male stalk of hemp, easily known by its superior strength and stature, and being without seed.
"Thou stalk o' carle-hemp in man." *Burns.*

Carlin. A stout old woman.
"Carlin, will your dochter marry?"
Scots Song.

Cartes. Cards.

Castock. The stalk of a cabbage.
"An there will be lang-cale and castocks."
Scots Song.

Caudron. A cauldron.
"Gar tell the lady o' the place
I'm come to clout her caudron." *Scots Song.*

Cauk and keel. Chalk and red clay.
"Wi' cauk an' keel I win my bread."
King James V.

Cauld. Cold.
"Cauld winter is awa', my luve." *Scots Song.*

Caup. A wooden drinking vessel, a cup.
"We drank out o' luggies, noggies, goans, caups, bickers, quaighs, an' stoups."
Scots Story.

Cavie. A hen-coop.
"Croose as a cock in his ain cavie." *Mayne.*

Cesses. Taxes.

Chanter. A part of a bagpipe, the drone.
"From their loud chanters down and sweep."
Scott.

Chap. A person, a fellow.
"I met four chaps yon birks amang." *Boswell.*

Chaup. A stroke, a blow.
"Wad neither chaup nor ca'. *Gil Morice.*

Cheek for chow. Close and united, brotherly, side by side.
"Gang cheek for chow whare'er we stray."
Macauley.

Cheekit. Cheeked.
"An' twa red cheekit apples." *Burns.*

Cheep. A chirp, to chirp.
"I wad rather hear the lark sing than the mouse cheep." *Scots Saying.*

Chiel, or cheal. A young fellow.
"The chiels may a' knit up themselves for me."
Ramsay.

Chimla, or Chimlie. A fire-grate, fire-place.
"And ilka chimla o' the house." *Jamieson.*

Chimla-lug. The fire-side.
"Ben to the chimla-lug." *Burns.*

Chirps. Cries of a young bird.

Chittering. Shivering, trembling.
"To let the chittering infant in." *Ramsay.*

Chockin'. Choking.

Chow. To chew; a quid of tobacco.
"He took aff his bannet and spat in his chow."
Old Song.

Chuckie. A brood hen.
"Wi' hook an' line he baited chuckie."
Pennycuik.

Chuffie. Fat-faced.
"How Bessie Fretocks chuffie cheekit wean."
Ramsay.

Clachan. A small village about a church, a hamlet.
"The first time that he met with me
Was at a clachan in the west." *Watson.*

Claise, or *claes.* Clothes.
"Quhill that my claes grew threadbare on my back."
Scots Rhyme.

Claith, claithing. Cloth, clothing.
"Ane tailyeour can nocht make ane garment
but of clayth." *Hamilton.*

Clapper-claps. The clapper of a mill; it is now silenced.
"When clack, clack, clack, he heard a mill."
Ramsay.

Clap-clack. Clapper of a mill.
"Whisky gill like clap o' mill,
Inspired his tongue wi' endless clatter."

Clartie. Dirty, filthy.
"With clarty silk about their tails." *Maitland.*

Clarkit. Wrote.
"Twa lines o' Davie Lyndsay wad ding a' he
ever clarkit." *Scott.*

Clash. An idle tale, the story of the day.
"The auld wives were making game,
An' roun' the clash did ca' man." *Scots Song.*

Clatter. To tell idle stories, an idle story.
"Some playes the fule and all out clatters."
Dunbar.

Claught. Snatched at, laid hold of.
"Auld Satan claught him by the spaul."
Jacobite Reliques.

Claut, clauted. To clean, to scrape, scraped.
"May it do nae gude to him who clauts it out
o' the widow's house." *Wilson.*

Clavers. Idle stories.

Clavers and *havers.* Agreeable nonsense, to talk foolishly.
"They frae a skelf began to claver." *Morison.*

Claw. To scratch.
"An' claw owre soon an auld man's pow." *Picken.*

Cleckin. A brood of chickens, or ducks.
"Scared frae its minnie an' the cleckin." *Burns.*

Cleed, cleads. To clothe, clothes.
"And leaves to cleed the lichen bowers."
Fergusson.

Cleek, cleckit. Hook, snatch; having caught.
"Syne up their leglins cleek." *Ramsay.*

Clegs. The gad flies.
"Of flyes, grasshoppers, hornets, clegs, an' clocks."
Hudson.

Clinkin'. "Jerking, Clinking down," sitting down hastily.

Clinkum-bell. The church bell; he who rings it; a sort of beadle.
"Auld Clinkum at the inner port cries three
times Robin." *Burns.*

Clips. Wool-shears.
"A bonnier fleece ne'er crossed the clips." *Burns.*

Clishmaclaver. Idle conversation.
"It's no right o' you, sir, to keep me clishma-
clavering." *Galt.*

Clock, clocking. To hatch, a beetle; hatching.
"Ye're sae keen o' clockin' ye'll die on the eggs."
Scots Proverb.

Cloot. The hoof of a cow, sheep, &c.
"When a hundred sheep rin how mony cloots
clatter." *Scots Saying.*

Clootie. A familiar name for the Devil.
"Auld Satan, Hornie, Nick, or Clootie." *Burns.*

Clour. A bump, or swelling, after a blow.
"Tho' mony had cloured pows." *Ramsay.*

Cloutin' Repairing with cloth.

Cluds. Clouds.
"The flaes they flew awa in cluds." *Old Song.*

Clunk. The sound in setting down an empty bottle.
"And made the bottle clunk
To their health that night." *Burns.*

Coaxin'. Wheedling.

Coble. A fishing-boat.
"A litel kobil there they met." *Wyntown.*

Cockernony. A lock of hair tied up on a girl's head, a cap.

Cod. A pillow.
"Twa heads may lie on ae cod, and naebody
ken where the luck lies." *Scots Proverb.*

Coft. Bought.
"He that all mankind coft frae care." *Wyntown.*

Cog, and *Coggie.* A wooden dish.
"I wadna gie my three-girred cog
For a' the queans in Bogie." *Old Song.*

Coila. From Kyle, a district in Ayr-shire, so called, saith tradition, from Coil, or Coilus, a Pictish Monarch.

Collie. A general, and sometimes a particular name for country curs.
"Or hounded collie owre the mossy bent."
Ramsay.

Collie-shangie. A quarrel among dogs, an Irish row.
"The collyshangy raise to sic a height." *Ross.*

Commaun. Command.
"I tald them I had seen the day they had nae
sic commaun." *Scots Song.*

Convoyed. Accompanied lovingly.
"A Kelso convoye—a stride an' a half owre
the door-stane." *Scots Proverb.*

Cool'd in her linens. Cool'd in her death-shift.
"Blessed be the day that she cooled in her linnens."
Burns.

Cood. The cud.

Coof. A blockhead, a ninny.
"The rest seem coofs compar'd wi' my dear Pate."
Ramsay.

Cookit. Appeared and disappeared by fits.
"All close under the cloud of night thou coukkit."
Kennedy.

Cooser, coosser. A stallion.
"Ye ken a fey man an' a coosser fears na the deil."
Scott.

Coost. Did cast.
"We coost the cavels us amang." *Old Ballad.*

Coot. The ancle, a species of water-fowl.
"Stand there and cool ye're coots." *Scots Say.*

Corbies. A species of the crow, blood crows.

Cootie. A wooden kitchen dish, rough-legged; also those fowls whose legs are clad with feathers are said to be *cootie.*
"Spairges about the brunstane cootie." *Burns.*

Core. Corps, party, clan.
"He was the king o' a' the core." *Burns.*

Corn't. Fed with oats.
"Thei were better cornyt than they were formyer."
Acts James II.

Cotter. The inhabitant of a cot-house, or cottage.
"A cotter is kept for each plough on the farm."
Sinclair.

Couthie. Kind, loving.
"Fu' weel they can ding dool away
Wi' comrades couthie." *Fergusson.*

Cove. A cave.
"King Constantine was ta'en and brought to
ane cove." *Bellenden.*

Cowe. To terrify, to keep under, to lop; a fright, a branch of furze, broom, &c.
"Ye wad gar me trow my head's cowed,
though there's no a hair wrang on't yet."
Scots Proverb.

Cowp. To barter, to tumble over.
"I mon run fast in drede I get a cowp."
Lyndsay.

Cowp the cran. To tumble a full bucket or basket.

Cowpit. Tumbled.
"First coupit up his heels, so that his head
went down." *Knox.*

Cowrin'. Cowering.

Cowte. A colt.
"Mony a ragged cowte's been known
To make a noble aiver." *Burns.*

Cozie, cozily. Snug, snugly.
"To keep you cozie in a hoord." *Ramsay.*

Crabbit. Crabbed, fretful.

Crack, crackin'. Conversation, to converse, to boast; conversing.
"When ye hae done it's time to crack."
Montgomery.

Craft, or *croft.* A field near a house, in old husbandry.
"The carle he came owre the craft." *Old Song.*

Craig, craigie. Neck.
"He stretched out his craig to the sword."
Pitscottie.

Craiks. Cries or calls incessantly, a species of bird, the corn-rail.
"That geese and gaisling cryis and craikis." *Polworth.*

Crambo-clink, or *crambo-jingle.* Rhymes, doggrel verses.

Crank. The noise of an ungreased wheel—metaphorically inharmonious verse.

Crankous. Fretful, captious.
"This while she's been in crankous mood." *Burns.*

Cranreuch. The hoar-frost, called in Nithsdale "frost-rhyne."
"No frost, excepting some cranreuch, or small frost."

Crap. A crop, to crop.
"That sword it crapped the bonniest flower." *Old Song.*

Craw. A crow of a cock, a rook.
"As the auld cock craws the young ane learns." *Scots Proverb.*

Creel. A basket, to have one's wits in a creel, to be craz'd, to be fascinated.
"Here come cadgers, creels an' a'." *Nursery Rhyme.*

Creeshie. Greasy.
"I ken by his greischy mou,
He has been at ane feast." *Lyndsay.*

Creuks. A disease of horses.
"She had the cleeks, the cauld, the creuks." *Old Song.*

Crood, or *Croud.* To coo as a dove.
"Where hae ye been a' day,
My wee wee crooding dow." *Old Ballad.*

Croon, Crooning. A hollow and continued moan; to make a noise like the continued roar of a bull; to hum a tune; humming.

Crouchie. Crook-backed.
"He swore 'twas hilchin Jean Macraw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie." *Burns.*

Crouse. Cheerful, courageous.
"They craw crouse that craw last." *Scots Proverb.*

Crously. Cheerfully, courageously.

Crowdie. A composition of oatmeal, boiled water and butter; sometimes made from the broth of beef, mutton, &c.

Crowdie time. Breakfast time.
"Crowdie ance, crowdie twice,
Crowdie three times in a day." *Old Song.*

Crowlin'. Crawling, a deformed creeping thing.

Crummie's nicks. Marks on the horns of a cow.
"My crummie is ane useful cow." *Scots Song.*

Crummock, Crummet. A cow with crooked horns.
"Spying an unco crummit beast." *Davidson.*

Crump, crumpin'. Hard and brittle, spoken of bread; frozen snow yielding to the foot.
"Lest his crumpin' tread should her untimely rouse." *Davidson.*

Crunt. A blow on the head with a cudgel.
"Though I had got a fell crunt ahint the haffet." *Scots Story.*

Cuddle. To clasp and caress.
"She cuddled in wi' Johnnie." *Ramsay.*

Cuif. A blockhead, a ninny.

Cummock. A short staff with a crooked head.
"To tremble under fortune's cummock." *Burns.*

Cummock driddle. Walk slowly, leaning on a staff with a crooked head.

Curch. A covering for the head, a kerchief.
"A soudely courche o'er head and neck let fall." *Blind Harry.*

Curchie. A curtsey, female obeisance.
"An' wi' a curchie low did stoop." *Burns.*

Curler. A player at a game on the ice, practised in Scotland, called curling.
"To curle on the ice does greatly please." *Pennecuik.*

Curlie. Curled, whose hair falls naturally in ringlets.
"Green curlie kale." *Scots Story.*

Curling. A well-known game on the ice.
"As cauld's a curling stane." *Scots Saying.*
"He was playing at curling with Riddel of Staining." *Fountainhall.*

Curmurring. Murmuring, a slight rumbling noise.

Curpin. The crupper, the rump.
"And were I a man I'd gar their curpins crack." *Hamilton.*

Curple. The rear.

Cushat. The dove, or wood-pigeon.
"The cushat croods, the corbie cryes." *Montgomery.*

Cutty. Short, a spoon broken in the middle.
"He gae to me a cuttie knife." *Old Ballad.*

Cutty Stool, or *Creepie Chair.* The seat of shame, stool of repentance.
"The cutty stool is a kind of pillory in the church." *Sinclair.*

D

Daddie. A father.
"Her daddie forbad, her minnie forbad." *Scots Song.*

Daffin'. Merriment, foolishness.
"Quhat kind of daffin' is this all day." *Lyndsay.*

Daft. Merry, giddy, foolish; *Daft-buckie*, mad fish.
"Thou art the daftest fule that evir I saw." *Lyndsay.*

Daimen. Rare, now and then; *daimen icker*, an ear of corn occasionally.
"Paste and Yule, and daimen times." *Scots Saying.*

Dainty. Pleasant, good-humoured, agreeable, rare.
"A dainty whistle, with a pleasant sound." *Ramsay.*

Dales. Plains, valleys.

Dandered. Wandered.
"Nae mair through flowery howes I'll dander." *Ramsay.*

Darklins. Darkling, without light.
"An' darklin grub this earthly hole." *Burns.*

Daud. To thrash, to abuse. *Daudin-showers*, rain urged by wind.
"Then took his bonnet to the bent,
And daudit off the glar." *Ramsay.*

Daur. To dare; *Daut*, dared; *Daurna*, dare not.
"Ye daur weel but ye downa." *Scots Saying.*

Daurg, or *Daurk.* A day's labour.
"He never wrought a gude darg that began grumbling. *Scots Proverb.*

Davoc. Diminutive of Davie, as Davie is of David.

Dawd. A large piece.
"Raw dauds make fat lads." *Scots Saying.*
"A dawd o' a bannock, or fadge to prie." *Old Ballad.*

Dawin'. Dawning of the day.
"Be this the dawin' gan at morn wax rede." *Gawin Douglas.*

Dawtit, Dawtet. Fondled, caressed.
"Or has some dauted wedder broke his leg." *Ramsay.*

Dearies. Diminutive of dears, sweethearts.
"I'll rowe thee owre the lea rig, my ain kind dearie O." *Old Song.*

Dearthfu'. Dear, expensive.
"Wi' bitter dearthfu' wines to mell." *Burns.*

Deave. To deafen.
"Wha tear their lungs and deave your ears." *Ramsay.*

Deil-ma-care. No matter, for all that.

Deleerit. Delirious.
"And lived and died deleerit." *Burns.*

Descrive. To describe, to perceive.
"How pleased he was I scarcely can descrive." *Hamilton.*

Deuks. Ducks.
"Mony a time he wad slip to see me wi' a brace o' wild deuks on his pouch, when my gudeman was at Falkirk tryste." *Scott.*

Dight. To wipe, to clean corn from chaff.
"They canna dight their tears now, sae fast as they fa'." *Old Song.*

Ding. To worst, to push, to surpass, to excel.
"Ye may ding the deil into a wife, but ye'll never ding him out o' her." *Scots Proverb.*

Dink. Neat, lady-like.
"A dink damsel makes aften a dirty wife." *Scots Proverb.*

Dinna. Do not.
"Dinna be chappit back, or cast down wi' the first rough answer." *Scott.*

Dirl. A slight tremulous stroke or pain, a tremulous motion.
"Gart Lawrie's heart-strings dirle." *Ramsay.*

Distain. Stain.
"May coward shame distain his name." *Burns.*

Dizzen, or *diz'n.* A dozen.
"Man's twal' is no sae gude as the deil's dizzen." *Scots Proverb.*

Dochter. Daughter.
"He repudit Agasia, the king of Britonis dochter." *Bellenden.*

Doited. Stupified, silly from age.
"Full doited was his head." *Dunbar.*

Dolt. Stupified, crazed; also a fool.

Donsie. Unlucky, affectedly neat and trim, pettish.
"For fear o' donsie whirl into the stream." *Davidson.*

Doodle. To dandle.
"I have an auld wife to my mither,
Will doodle it on her knee." *Scots Song.*

Dool. Sorrow; *to sing dool*, to lament, to mourn.
"O dool for the order, sent our lads to the border." *Scots Song.*

Doo, doos. A dove, doves, pigeons.
"Thou wee wee crouding doo." *Nursery Song.*

Dorty. Saucy, nice.
"Your well-seen love, and dorty Jenny's pride." *Ramsay.*

Douce, or *douse.* Sober, wise, prudent.
"I've given a douse advice and plain." *Ramsay.*

Doucely. Soberly, prudently.
"So ye may doucely fill a throne." *Burns.*

Dought. Was or were able.
"And never dought a doit afford." *Ramsay.*

Doup. Bottom.
"But a' the skaith that chanced indeed
Was only on their doups." *Ramsay.*

Doup-skelper. One that strikes the tail.
"And dirl the bairns's doups and loofs." *Scots Poem.*

Dour and din. Sullen and sallow.
"He had a wife was dour and din." *Burns.*

Douse. Sober, wise, prudent.
"O ye douse pepill discend from Dardanus." *G. Douglas.*

Douser. More prudent.
"A doucer man never brak warld's bread." *Scots Saying.*

Dow. Am, or are, able, can.
"Though he dow not to leid a tyke. *Dunbar.*

Dowff. Pithless, wanting force.
"Void of curage, and dowff as ony stane." *G. Douglas.*

Dowie. Worn with grief, fatigue, &c., half asleep.
"The dowie tones and lays lamentabil." *G. Douglas.*

Downa. Am, or are, not able, cannot.
"But downa do's come owre me now." *Burns.*

Doylt. Wearied, exhausted, stupid.
"Sair doylt wi' driving o' his hirsel hame." *T. Cunningham.*

Dozen. Stupified, the effects of age, to dozen, to benumb.
"The birds of clay
Dozen in silence on the bending spray." *Fergusson.*

Drab. A young female beggar; to spot, to stain.
"She drabbled them owre wi' a black tade's blude." *Scots Song.*

Drap, drapping. A drop, to drop; dropping.
"She's a drap o' my dearest blude." *Scots Saying.*

Draunting. Drawling, speaking with a sectarian tone.
"He drinks wi' Clavers and draunts wi' Cameron." *Scots Saying.*

Dreep. To ooze, to drop.
"And fuish me out an' laid me down to dreep." *Ross.*

Dreigh. Tedious, long about it, lingering.
"A dreigh drink is better than a dry sermon." *Scots Saying.*

Dribble. Drizzling, trickling, slaver.
"An' dribbles o' drink coming through the draff." *Scots Song.*

Driddle. The motion of one who tries to dance but moves the middle only.
"Wha used at trystes an' fairs to driddle." *Burns.*

Drift. A drove, a flight of fowls, snow moved by the wind.
"Better an even down snaw than a driving drift." *Scots Proverb.*

Droddum. The breech.
"Wad dress yere droddum." *Burns.*

Drone. Part of a bagpipe, the chanter.

Droop-rumpl't. That droops at the crupper.
"The sma' droop-rumpl't hunter cattle." *Burns.*

Droukit. Wet.
"All droukit and forewrocht." *G. Douglas.*

Drouth. Thirst, drought.
"The balmy dewe thro' burning drouth he dries." *King James VI.*

Drucken. Drunken.
"Some drucken, wi' drouth do burn." *Har'st Rig.*

Drumlie, drumly. Muddy.
"Drumly of mude and skaldand as it were wode." *G. Douglas.*

Drummock, or *Drammock.* Meal and water mixed, raw.
"For to refresh my stamoch,
I was received and fed with drammock." *Watson's Collection.*

Drunt. Pet, sour humour.
"And Mailie nae doubt took the drunt." *Burns.*

Dub. A small pond, a hollow filled with rain water.
"There lay a deuk-dub at my daddie's door." *Old Song.*

Duds, duddie. Rags, clothes; ragged.
"A hair-brained wee ane wagging a' wi' duds." *Ross.*

Dung-Dang. Worsted, pushed, stricken.
"Jenny dang the weaver." *Old Song.*

Dunted. Throbbed, beaten.
"He dunted the kist and the boards did flee." *Old Song.*

Dush, dunsh. To push or butt as a ram.
"The unco brute much dunching dreed." *Davidson.*

Dusht. Overcome with superstitous fear, to drop down suddenly, pushed by a ram, &c.
"Down duschit he in dede thraw all forloist." *Gawin Douglas.*

Dyvor. Bankrupt, or about to become one.
"A dyvour buys your butter, woo' and cheese,
But or the day of payment breaks and flees." *Ramsay.*

E

E'e. The eye.
"And the blythe blinks in her e'e." *Old Song.*

Een. The eyes, the evening.
"A winding sheet drawn o'er my een." *Old Song.*

E'ebree. The eyebrow.
"Her bonnie e'ebree's a holy arch." *Scots Song.*

E'enin'. The evening.

Eerie. Frighted, haunted, dreading spirits.
"Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way." *Old Ballad.*

Eild. Old age.
"Ane hundreth maidens had she young and eild." *Gawin Douglas.*

Elbuck. The elbow.
"Hab fidg'd and leugh, his elbuck clew." *Ramsay.*

Eldritch. Ghastly, frightful, elvish.

En'. End.
"O haste ye an' come to our gate en'." *Scots Song.*

Enbrugh. Edinburgh.
"As I came in by Enbrugh town." *Old Song.*

Eneugh. Enough.
"But thei war glad eneugh." *Dunbar.*

Especial. Especially.

Ether-stone. Stone formed by adders, an adder bead.

Ettle. To try, attempt, aim.
"If I but ettle at a sang." *Ramsay.*

Eydent. Diligent.
"Them that's slack in gude are eydent in ill." *Scots Saying.*

F

Fa', Fa's. Fall, lot, to fall, fate; does fall.
"Brig of Balgonie, black be your fa'." *Scots Saying.*

Fa' that. To enjoy, to try, to inherit.
"How Marstig's daughter I may fa'." *Jamieson.*

Faddom't. Fathomed, measured with the extended arms.

Faes. Foes.
"Now my dear lad maun face his faes." *Mayne.*

Faem. Foam of the sea.
"Amang the white sea faem." *Scots Ballad.*

Faiket. Forgiven or excused, abated, a demand.
"I'll no faik a farden o' my right." *Galt.*

Fainness. Gladness, overcome with joy.

Fairin'. Fairing, a present brought from a fair.
"He'll gie him his fairin' I'll be caution for't." *Scott.*

Fallow. Fellow.
"It is full fair to be fallow and feir." *Scots Poem.*

Fand. Did find.
"For a while their dwelling good they fand." *Hudson.*

Farl. A cake of bread; third part of a cake.
"O'er a weel tostit girdle farl." *Fergusson.*

Fash, fasht. Trouble, care, to trouble, to care for, troubled.
"They're fenyiet freens that canna be fasht." *Scots Proverb.*

Fasheous. Troublesome.

Fasten e'en. Fasten's even.

Faught. Fight.
"Man is a sodger and life is a faught." *Burns.*

Faugh. A single furrow, out of lea, fallow.
"Farmers faugh gars lairds laugh." *Scots Proverb.*

Fauld, faulding. A fold for sheep, to fold; folding.
"Will ye ca' in by our town as ye gang to the fauld." *Scots Song.*

Faut. Fault.
"Wha will own he did the faut." *Burns.*

Fawsont. Decent, seemly.

Feal. Loyal, stedfast; a field, smooth.
"Farewell my leal, feal friend." *Scott.*

Fearfu'. Fearful, frightful.

Fear't. Affrighted.

Feat. Neat, spruce, clever.
"The naturally neat will aye be feat." *Scots Saying.*

Fecht, Fechtin'. To fight, fighting.
"Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck." *Burns.*

Feck. Number, quantity.
"My words they were na mony feck." *Scots Song.*

Fecket. An under waistcoat.

Feckfu'. Large, brawny, stout.
"Till mony a feckfull chiel that day was slain." *Hamilton.*

Feckless. Puny, weak, silly.
"Breathless and feckless there she sits her down." *Ross.*

Feckly. Mostly, weakly.
"Three carts and twa are feckly new." *Burns.*

Feg. A fig.

Fegs. Faith, an exclamation.
"By my fegs
Ye've set auld Scota on her legs." *Beattie.*

Feide. Feud, enmity.
"Quhar Wilyham micht be bettir frae thair feide." *Blind Harry.*

Fell. Keen, biting; the flesh immediately under the skin; a field pretty level, or the side or top of a hill.

Felly. Relentless.
"Fortune's felly spite." *Burns.*

Fend. To make a shift, to contrive to live.
"For poortith I might make a fen." *Burns.*

Ferlie, or *ferley.* To wonder, a wonder, a term of contempt.
"Nane ferlies mair than fulis." *Montgomery.*

Fetch, fetch't. To pull by fits; pulled intermittently.

Fey. Strange; one marked for death, predestined.
"The folk was fey that he before him fand." *Blind Harry.*

Fidge. To fidget, fidgetting.
"No ane gies e'er a fidge or fyke." *Macaulay.*

Fidgin'-fain. Tickled with pleasure.
"I'm fidging-fain to see you." *Scots Song.*

Fiel. Soft, smooth.

Fient. Fiend, a petty oath.
"Fient a crum o' thee she fa's. *Old Song.*

Fien-ma-care. The devil may care.
"I'm the deil, quo he, fien ma' care, quo I." *Scots Story.*

Fier, fiere. Sound, healthy; a brother, a friend.
"There's Jenny comely, fier and tight. *A. Douglas.*

Fissle. To make a rustling noise, to fidget, bustle, fuss.
"The oddest fike and fissle that e'er was seen." *Ross.*

Fit. Foot.
"O think that eild wi' wyly fit." *Fergusson.*

Fittie-lan. The nearer horse of the hindmost pair in the plough.

Fizz. To make a hissing noise, fuss, disturbance.
"What fizzes in the mou' winna feed the wame." *Scots Saying.*

Flaffen. The motion of rags in the wind; of wings.
"There was rustlin o' silks an' flaffin o' feathers." *Scots Story.*

Flainen. Flannel.

Flang. Threw with violence.

Fleech, fleechin'. To supplicate in a flattering manner; supplicating.
"At fairs or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching." *Old Song.*

Fleesh. A fleece.
"As fox in ane lambes fleesch feinge I my cheir." *Dunbar.*

Fleg. A kick, a random blow, a fight.
"Syne at the lown a fearful fleg let flee." *Hamilton.*

Flether. To decoy by fair words.
"Aye flether away; since I'll no do wi' foul play, try me wi fair." *Scots Saying.*

Flethrin, flethers. Flattering—smooth wheedling words.

Fley. To scare, to frighten.
"Them that's ill fleyed are seldom sair hurt." *Scots Proverb.*

Flichter, flichtering. To flutter as young nestlings do when their dam approaches; fluttering.
"I trow my heart was flichtering fain." *Scots Song.*

Flinders. Shreds, broken pieces.
"Into a thousand flinders flew." *Scott.*

Flingin-tree. A piece of timber hung by way of partition between two horses in a stable; a flail.

Flisk, flisky, fliskit. To fret at the yoke, fretted.
"But never ane will be sae daft as tent auld Johnies flisky dame." *Hogg.*
"Fasheous fools are easiest flisket." *Scots Proverb.*

Flitter. To vibrate like the wings of small birds.
"She's a bad sitter that's ay in a flitter." *Scots Proverb.*

Flittering. Fluttering, vibrating, moving tremulously from place to place."

Flunkie. A servant in livery.
"So flunky braw when drest in Maister's claise." *Fergusson.*

Flyte, flyting. Scold; scolding.
"Quha cannot hald their peace are free to flyte." *Gawin Douglas.*

Foord A ford.
"I aye roose the foord as I ride it." *Scots Proverb.*

Forbears. Forefathers.
"Thare our forbearis in their credillis lay." *Gawin Douglas.*

Forbye. Besides.
"Forbye the ghaist, the green room does na vent weel in a high wind." *Scott.*

Forfairn. Distressed, worn out, jaded, forlorn, destitute.
"So sadly forfairn were we." *Ross.*

Forfoughten, foughten. Troubled, fatigued.
"Or gif I wes forfochten faynt." *King James.*

Forgather. To meet, to encounter with.
"Fools are fond o' a' they foregather wi'. *Scots Proverb.*

Forgie. To forgive.
"It's easier to forgi'e than forget." *Scots Prov.*

Forinawed. Worn out.
"Forjidged, forjesket, forinawed." *Scots Rhymes.*

Forjesket. Jaded with fatigue.
"Forejidged, forfoughten an' forjesket." *Scots Saying.*

Fother. Fodder.

Fou'. Full, drunk.
"I persaive him well fou'." *Lyndsay.*

Fouth. Plenty, enough, or more than enough.
"Thy copious fouth or plenitude." *G. Douglas.*

Fow. A measure, a bushel: also a pitchfork.
"Some fork low but ye fow owre the mou." *Scots Saying.*

Frae. From.
"Far far frae me and Logan braes." *Mayne.*

Freath. Froth; the frothing of ale in the tankard.
"O rare to see thee fizz and freath." *Burns.*

Frien'. Friend.
"A firm frien' may be found in the fremit."
Scots Saying.

Frosty-calker. The heels and front of a horse-shoe, turned sharply up for riding on an icy road.

Fu'. Full.
"I'm no just fou, but I'm gayley yet." *Old Song.*

Fud. The scut or tail of the hare, coney, &c.
"An' scarcely left to co'er their fuds." *Burns.*

Fuff, fuff't. To blow intermittently; did blow.
"The breath o' a fause frien's waur nor the fuff o' a weasel." *Scots Proverb.*

Fu-hant. Full-handed; said of one well to live in the world.
"He canna fail fair that breaks wi' the fu' han'."
Scots Proverb.

Funnie. Full of merriment.
"When he has his grog aboard he's so d—d funny wi' his cranks and his jests." *Scott.*

Fur. A furrow.

Fur-ahin. The hindmost horse on the right hand when ploughing.
"My fur-ahin's a wordy beast." *Burns.*

Furder. Further, succeed.
"Weel, my babie, may ye furder." *Scots Song.*

Furm. A form, a bench.

Fyke. Trifling cares, to be in a fuss about trifles.
"And made the carles strangely fidge and fyke."
Hamilton.

Fyle, fyl't. To soil, to dirty; soiled.
"Her face wad' fyle the Logan water." *Burns.*

G

Gab. The mouth, to speak boldly or pertly.
"I'll thraw my gab and gloom." *Ramsay.*

Gaberlunzie. Wallet-man, or tinker.
"She's aff wi' the gaberlunzie man."
King James V.

Gadsman. Plough-boy, the boy that drives the horses in the plough.

Gae. To go; *gaed*, went; *gane*, or *gaen*, gone; *gaun*, going.
"Fy gae rub her owre wi' strae." *Scots Song.*

Gaet, or *gate.* Way, manner, road.
"I'll ne'er advise my niece sae grey a gate."
Ramsay.

Gairs. Parts of a lady's gown.
"My lady's gown there's gairs upon't." *Burns.*

Gang. To go, to walk.
"Full tenderlie till thou beyonth to gang."
Dunbar.

Gangrel. A wandering person.
"An' like a gangarel on to graep." *Dunbar.*

Gar. To make, to force to; *gar't*, forced to.
"Fye gar ride and fye gar rin." *K. James V.*

Garten. A garter.
"Bot of ane auld red gartane." *Scots Poem.*

Gash, gashing. Wise, sagacious, talkative, to converse; conversing.
"The cheering supper gars them glibly gash."
Fergusson.

Gatty. Failing in body.
"She's grown gattie that was ance a dautie."
Scots Saying.

Gaucy. Jolly, large, plump.
"When pacing wi' a gawcy air." *Fergusson.*

Gaud and *gad.* A rod or goad.
"A red het gad o' airn." *Old Ballad.*

Gaudsman. One who drives the horses at the plough.
"A gadsman ane, a thresher t'other." *Burns.*

Gaun. Going.
"She's gaun gear, gaun gear." *Scots Saying.*

Gaunted. Yawned, longed.
"When he list gaunt or blaw the fyre is bet."
G. Douglas.

Gawky, gawkie. Half-witted, foolish, romping; a thoughtless person and something weak.
"Wert thou a giglet gawky like the lave."
Ramsay.

Gaylies, gaylie. Pretty well.
"I'm no that fou' but I'm gaylie yet." *Scots Song.*

Gear. Riches, goods of any kind.
"Which made the laird take up more gear."
Watson.

Geck. To toss the head in wantonness or scorn.
"She gecks at me and says I smell o' tar."
Ramsay.

Ged. A pike.
"Ged of that ilk had three geds, or pykis argent." *Mackenzie.*

Gentles. Great folks.
"Here ride gentles, spurs an' a'."
Nursery Rhymes.

Genty. Elegant.
"Her waist and feet's fu' genty." *Ramsay.*

Geordie. George, a guinea, called Geordie from the head of King George.
"And they hae slain Sir Charlie Hay,
An' laid the wyte on Geordie." *Old Ballad*

Get and *geat.* A child, a young one.
"Then Cupid, that ill-deedy get." *Ramsay.*

Ghaist ghaistis. A ghost.
"All is but gaistis and elrische fantasayes."
G. Douglas.

Gie. To give; *gied*, gave; *gien*, given.
"Gie her a kiss an' let her gae." *Scots Song.*

Giftie. Diminutive of gift.
"Wad but some power the giftie gie us."
Burns.

Giglets. Laughing maidens, playful girls.
"But what if some young giglet on the green." *Ramsay.*

Gillie, gillock. Diminutive of gill.
"He gangs frae the jilt to the jillock."
Scots Saying.

Gilpey. A half-grown, half-informed boy or girl, a romping lad, a hoyden.
"A gilpey that had seen the faught." *Ramsay.*

Gimmer. An ewe two years old, a contemptuous term for a woman.
"The mim-mou'd gimmers them misca'd."
Galloway.

Gin. If, against.
"Gin a body meet a body coming thro' the rye." *Scots Song.*

Gipsey. A young girl.
"Gypsey, a young girl, a term of reproach."
Sibbald.

Girdle. A round iron plate on which oat-cake is fired.
"Or Culross girdles on it hammer." *Meston.*

Girn, girning. To grin, to twist the features in rage, agony, &c.; grinning.
"At hame to girn, and whinge, and pine."
Fergusson.

Gizz. A perriwig, the face.
"Set up a frightfu' gizz." *Tarras.*

Glaikit. Inattentive, foolish.
"Quhattane ane glaikit fule am I."
Scottish Chronicles.

Glaive. A sword.
"O wae be to the hand whilk drew na' the glaive." *Scots Song.*

Glaizie. Glittering, smooth, like glass.
"I've seen thee dapplit, sleek an' glazie."
Burns.

Glaumed. Grasped, snatched at eagerly.
"Few get what they glaum at." *Scots Prov.*

Girran. A poutherie girran, a little vigorous animal; a horse rather old, but yet active when heated.

Gled. A hawk.
"And by them cam the greedy gled."
Scots Proverb.

Gleg. Sharp, ready.
"To Berwick Law make gleg retreat."
Fergusson.

Glen. Dale, deep valley.

Gleib, Glieb o' lan'. A portion of ground. The ground belonging to a manse is called "the glieb," or portion.

Gley. A squint, to squint; *a-gley*, off at a side, wrong.
"Sum scornit him, sum gleyd carl called him thair." *Blind Harry.*

Gleyde. An old horse.
"Ane crukit gleyd fell owre ane heugh."
Bannatyne.

Glib-gabbit. That speaks smoothly and readily.
"An' that glib-gabbit Highland baron." *Burns.*

Glint, Glintin'. To peep, peeping.
"The sun was glinting owre the scene." *Mayne.*

Glinted by. Went brightly past.
"It was nae sae ye glinted by." *Burns.*

Gloamin'. The twilight.
"At e'en in the gloamin' nae swankies are roamin." *Scots Song.*

Gloamin shot. Twilight, musing; a shot in the twilight.
"A gloamin shot it was, I trow." *Burns.*

Glow'r. To stare, to look; a stare, a look.
"He girn't, he glowr'd." *Dunbar.*

Glowrin'. Around, looking suspiciously, gazing.
"My mither's ay glowran owre me." *Ramsay.*

Glum. Displeased.
"Glum fowks no easily guided." *Scots Proverb.*

Gor-cocks. The red game, red cock, or moor-cock.

Goavan. Walking as if blind, or without an aim.
"Some show a gliff o' the gowk, but yere aye goavan." *Scots Proverb.*

Gowan. The flower of the daisy, dandelion, hawk-weed, &c.
"Where the gowan heads hang pearly." *Scots Song.*

Gowany. Covered with daisies.
"Sweeter than gowany glens, or new mown hay." *Ramsay.*

Gowd. Gold.
"And gowd amang her hair." *Scots Song.*

Gowl. To howl.
"The ravening pack are gowling led." *Davidson.*

Gowf. A fool; the game of golf, to strike, as the bat does the ball at golf.
"A gowf at Yule will no be bright at Beltane." *Scots Proverb.*

Gowk. Term of contempt, a cuckoo.
"The gowk, the gormaw, and the gled." *Dunbar.*
"Daft gowk leave off that silly whinging way." *Ramsay.*

Grane, or *grain.* A groan, to groan; *graining,* groaning.
"He graned like ony ghaist." *King James I.*

Grained and gaunted. Groaned and yawned.

Graip. A pronged instrument for cleaning cowhouses.
"The graip he for a harrow tak's." *Burns.*

Graith. Accoutrements, furniture, dress, gear.
"The irne graith, the werkmen and the wrichtis." *Douglas.*

Grannie. Grandmother.
"The gladness which dwells in their auld grannie's e'e." *Scots Song.*

Grape. To grope; *grapit,* groped.
"Quhilk ye shall see and grape." *Lyndsay.*

Grat. Wept, shed tears.

Great, grit. Intimate, familiar.
"Awa, awa, the deil's owre grit wi' you." *Ramsay.*

Gree. To agree; *to bear the gree,* to be decidedly victor; *gree't,* agreed.
"Allan bears
The gree himself, and the green laurel wears." *Ross.*

Green-graff. Green grave.
"They howkit his graff in the Dukit Kirkyard." *Scots Song.*

Greet. To shed tears, to weep; *greetin',* weeping.
"For sorrowe he 'gan grete." *Sir Tristrem.*

Grey-neck-quill. A quill unfit for a pen.
"He's frae the tap o' the wing, but yere a grey-neck-quill." *Scots Proverb.*

Grien. Longing, desire.
"And folk wad threep that she did grien." *Ramsay.*

Grieves. Stewards.
"A gude grieve is better than an ill worker." *Scots Proverb.*

Grippit. Seized, catched.
"And they hae grippit Hughie Graham." *Old Bal.*

Groanin-maut. Drink for the cummers at a lying in.
"Wha will buy my groanin maut." *Burns.*

Groat. To get the whistle of one's groat; to play a losing game, to feel the consequences of one's folly.

Grousome, or *Gruesome.* Loathsomely, grim.
"Thy gruesome grips were never scaithly." *Hogg.*

Grozet. A gooseberry.
"He lap at me like a cock at a grozet." *Scots Saying.*

Grumph. A grunt, to grunt.
"What can ye get of a sow but a grumph." *Scots Proverb.*

Grumphie, grumphin. A sow; the snorting of an angry pig.
"Better speak bauldly out than aye be grumphing." *Scots Proverb.*

Grun'. Ground.
"He's sometimes in the air, but ye're aye on the grun'." *Scots Saying.*

Grunstone. A grindstone.
"Be to the poor like ony whunstane,
An' haud their noses to the grunstane." *Burns.*

Gruntle. The phiz, the snout, a grunting noise.
"The gruntill of Santt Antonis sow." *Lyndsay.*

Grunzie. A mouth which pokes out like that of a pig; the face, the countenance.
"Dights her grunzie wi' a hushion." *Burns.*

Grushie. Thick, of thriving growth.
"Ye're a' grease, but I'm only grushie." *Scots Saying.*

Gude, guid, guids. The Supreme being, good, goods.
"Let us choose five of this guid companye." *Blind Harry.*

Gude auld-has-been. Was once excellent.
"My lan' afore's a gnid-auld-has-been." *Burns.*

Guid mornin'. Good morrow.
"Guid mornin' maist blythely the auld carle said." *Scots Song.*

Guid e'en. Good evening.
"Wi' mony guid e'ens an' guid days to me." *K. James V.*

Guidfather and Guidmother. Father-in-law, and Mother-in-law.
"Caratak fled to his gude moder Cartumandia." *Bellenden.*

Guidman and Guidwife. The master and mistress of the house; *young guidman,* a man newly married.
"The auld guid man that thou talks of." *Scots Song.*

Gully, or *gullie.* A large knife.
"Yon gullie is nae mows." *Ramsay.*

Gulravage. Joyous mischief.
"Watty's was a walloping gulravage." *Galt.*

Gumlie. Muddy.
"What's this that I see jaupin gumlie?" *Tarras.*

Gumption. Discernment, knowledge, talent.
"They're but unlearned clerks,
And want the gumption." *Hamilton.*

Gusty, gustfu'. Tasteful.
"O withered bent wi' gustfu' hungry bite." *Davidson.*

Gut-scraper. A fiddler.
"As weel as puir gut-scraper. *Burns.*

Gutcher. Grandsire.
"Ye might be my gutcher." *Macniell.*

H

Ha'. Hall.
"Stately stept he east the ha'." *Scots Ballad.*

Ha' Bible. The great bible that lies in the hall.
"The big ha' bible, ance his father's pride." *Burns.*

Haddin'. House, home, dwelling-place, a possession.
"Tho' her hauding be but sma'." *Train.*

Hae, ha'en. To have, to accept; haven.
"He's no sae deaf; he hears when they say hae." *Scots Proverb.*

Haet, fient haet. A petty oath of negation; nothing.
"Diel haet has she but the gown she gangs in." *Scots Saying.*

Haffet. The temple, the side of the head.
"Clinkand about his haffets with ane din." *Douglas.*

Hafflins. Nearly half, partly, not fully grown.
"While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak." *Burns.*

Hag. A gulf in mosses and moors, moss ground.
"His honour was wi' the folk who were getting down the dark hag." *Scott.*

Haggis. A kind of pudding, boiled in the stomach of a cow or sheep.
"As thou wad for a haggis, hungry gled." *Dunbar.*

Hain. To spare, to save, to lay out at interest.
"Jump't in, swam o'er, and hain'd his plack." *Ramsay.*

Hain'd. Spared; *hain'd gear,* hoarded money.
"Hain'd gear helps well." *Scots Proverb.*

Hairst. Harvest.
"In hairst at the shearing." *Scots Song.*

Haith. A petty oath.
"Haith Allan hath bright rays." *A. Nicol.*

Haivers. Nonsense, speaking without thought.
"Some hae haurls o' sense, but yere aye haivering." *Scots Proverb.*

Hal', or *hald.* An abiding place.
"Ane gousty hald within laithlie to see." *G. Douglas.*

Hale, or *haill.* Whole, tight, healthy.
"Weyll rewlytt off tong, right haill of contenance." *Blind Harry.*

Hallan. A particular partition wall in a cottage, or more properly a seat of turf at the outside.
"Hab got a kent stood by the hallan." *Ramsay.*

Hallowmass. Hallow eve, the 31st of October.
"When hallowmass is come and gane." *Scots Song.*

Haly. Holy; "haly-pool," holy well with healing qualities.
"Thir Rapys war gude haly men." *Wyntown.*

Hame. Home.
"Hame is ay hame be it ever sae hamely." *Scots Proverb.*

Hammered. The noise of feet like the din of hammers.
"He in the parlour hammered." *Burns.*

Han' or *Haun'*, *Han's breed.* Hand; hand's breadth.
"A limpin leg a han's breed shorter." *Burns.*

Hanks. Thread as it comes from the measuring reel, quantities, &c.
"Her hair in hanks o' gowden thread." *Scots Song.*

Hansel-throne. Throne when first occupied by a king.
"To hansel a new coat is to put a coin in the pocket."

Hap. An outer garment, mantle, plaid, &c; to wrap, to cover, to hap.
"I'll make a hap for my Johnny Faa." *Scots Song.*

Harigals. Heart, liver, and lights of an animal.
"He that never eats flesh thinks harigals a feast." *Scots Proverb.*

Hap-shackled. When a fore and hind foot of a ram are fastened together to prevent leaping, he is said to be hap-shackled. A wife is called "the kirk's hap-shackle."

Happer. A hopper, the hopper of a mill.
"An' heapet high the happer." *Scots Song.*

Hap-step-an'-loup. Hop—step—and leap.
"The best gie whiles a jump, but yere aye at hap-step-an'-loup." *Scots Saying.*

Harkit. Hearkened.
"Had I to guid advice but harkit." *Burns.*

Harn. A very coarse linen.
"As coarse as Nancie's harn sark — three threads out o' the pund." *Scots Saying.*

Hash. A fellow who knows not how to dress nor act with propriety.
"I canna thole the clash
Of this impertinent old hash." *Ramsay.*

Hastit. Hastened.
"He hastit to his end like the moth to the caunle." *Scots Proverb.*

Haud. To hold.
"Some can steek their neive, but ye hae nae haud o' yere han'." *Scots Proverb.*

Haughs. Low lying, rich lands, valleys.
"Amid the haughs and every lusty vale." *G. Douglas.*

Haurl. To drag, to pull violently.
"Achilles haurlet Hector's body thrys." *G. Douglas.*

Haurlin'. Tearing off, pulling roughly.
"He haurled auld luckie out o' her bed." *Scots Song.*

Haver-meal. Oatmeal.
"Whare gat ye that haver-meal bannock." *Scots Song.*

Haveril. A half-witted person, half-witted, one who habitually talks in a foolish or incoherent manner.
"Ye've learned to crack sae crouse, ye haveril Scot." *Fergusson.*

Havins. Good manners, decorum, good sense.
"For me to speer wad nae gude havins been." *Ross.*

Hawkie. A cow, properly one with a white face.
"Whan han' for nieve the hawkies stan'." *Picken.*

Heapit. Heaped.
"Some strake the measure o' justice, but ye giet heapit." *Scots Proverb.*

Healsome. Healthful, wholesome.
"As healsome as the waal o' Spa, an' unco' blate." *Ramsay.*

Hearse. Hoarse.
"Alas! my roupit muse is hearse." *Burns.*

Heather. Heath.
"As fire to heather set." *Scots Ballad.*

Hech. Oh, strange, an exclamation during heavy work.
"The silliest strake has the loudest hech." *Scots Proverb.*

Hecht. Promised, to foretell something that is to be got or given, foretold, the thing foretold, offered.
"And thai may hecht als to fulfill." *Barbour.*

Heckle. A board in which are fixed a number of sharp steel prongs upright for dressing hemp, flax, &c.
"I'd climb a hill o' heckle teeth
For luve o' thee, my lady O." *Scots Song.*

Hee balou. Words used to soothe a child.
"Hee balou, my sweet wee Donald." *Burns.*

Heels-owre-gowdie. Topsy turvy, turned the bottom upwards.
"I couped Mungo's ale
Clean heels o'er head, when it was ripe an' stale." *Ross.*

Heeze. To elevate, to rise, to lift.
"Towart the lift wi' mony a heeze and hale." *G. Douglas.*

Hellim. The rudder or helm
"An' did our hellim thraw, man." *Burns.*

Herd. To tend flocks, one who tends flocks.
"When they were able now to herd the ewes." *Ross.*

Herry. To plunder; most properly to plunder birds' nests.
"And herryit them in sic manner. *Barbour.*

Herryment. Plundering, devastation.
"Ha'es nae herryment." *Scots Proverb.*

Hersel', *hirsel'.* Herself; a flock of sheep, also a herd of cattle of any sort.
"Ae scabbit sheep will scau' the hale hirsel." *Scots Proverb.*

Hessel. So many cattle as one person can attend.

Het. Hot, heated.
"Strike iron while it's het, if ye'd have it to wald." *Ramsay.*

Heugh. A crag, a ravine; *coal heugh*, a coal pit; *lowin heugh*, a blazing pit.
"Sae hich up in the heugh." *Montgomery.*

Hilch, *hilchin'.* To halt, halting.
"He swore 'twas hilchin' Jean Macraw." *Burns.*

Himsel'. Himself.

Hiney. Honey.
"For though thy hair were hanks o' gowd,
And thy lips o' drappit hinny." *Scots Song.*

Hing. To hang.
"Gar hing him, hang him, high upon a tree." *Scots Song.*

Hirple. To walk crazily, to walk lamely, to creep.
"He, tired and weary, hirpled down the brae." *Ross.*

Histie. Dry, chapt, barren.
"With hirstis harsh of waggand windil strayis." *G. Douglas.*

Hitcht. A loop, make a knot.

Hizzie. Hussy, a young girl.
"A braw bouncing hizzie O." *Scots Song.*

Hoddin. The motion of a husbandman riding on a cart-horse.
"Gaed hoddin by their cotters." *Burns.*

Hoddin-grey. Woollen cloth of a coarse quality made by mingling one black fleece with a dozen white ones.
"Maun with the shepherds stay
And tauk what God will send in hoddin grey." *Ramsay.*

Hoggie. A two-year old sheep.
"An unco' tyke lap owre the dyke,
An' maist has killed my hoggie." *Burns.*

Hog-score. A distance line in curling drawn across the rink. When a stone fails to cross it, a cry is raised of "A hog, a hog," and it is removed.

Hog-shouther. A kind of horse play by justling with the shoulder; to justle.
"Hog-shouther, jundie stretch an' strive." *Burns.*

Hoodie-craw. A blood crow, corbie.
"The huddit craws cried varrok, varrok."

Hool. Outer skin or case, a nutshell, pea husk.
"I thought my heart had coupit frae its hool."
Ross.

Hoolie. Slowly, leisurely.
"Oh! that my wife wad drink hoolie and fairly."
Scots Song.

Hoord. A hoard, to hoard.
"He hid a bodle and thought it a hoord."
Scots Saying.

Hoordit. Hoarded.
"It's owre weel hoordit that canna be foun'."
Scots Proverb.

Horn. A spoon made of horn.
"Ram horns a-piece, an' hae done wi't."
Tinker's Grace.

Hornie. One of the many names of the devil.
"Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie." *Burns.*

Host, or *hoast, hostin'.* To cough; coughing.

Hotch'd. Hitched, turned topsy-turvy, blended, mixed.
"Gude help ye to a hotch, for ye'll never get a coach." *Scots Proverb.*

Houghmagandie. Loose behaviour, fornication.
"An' mony a job that day begun
May end in houghmagandie." *Burns.*

Housie. Diminutive of house.
"Thy wee bit housie too in ruin." *Burns.*

Hove, hoved. To heave, to swell.
"The whole body is hoved like a loaf."
Hogg—Highland Society Trans.

Howdie. A midwife.
"How Mungo's mare stood still and swat wi' fright,
When he brought cast the howdie under night."
Ramsay.

Howe. Hollow, a hollow or dell.
"Every hight has a how behind it." *Scots Prov.*

Howebackit. Sunk in the back, spoken of a horse.
"Ye'll ne'er grow howbackit bearing yere frien's."
Scots Proverb.

Howff. A house of resort, a hiding-place.
"Frae ilka favourite howff and beild." *Fergusson.*

Howk. To dig.
"Be there gowd where he's to beek,
He'll howk it out o' brimstone smeek."
Scots Poem.

Howkit. Digged.
"They howkit his graff in the Duket's kirkyard."
Old Ballad.

Howkin'. Digging deep.

Howlet. An owl.
"He kens nae a mavis frae a madge howlet."
Scots Proverb.

Hoy, hoy't. To urge, urged.
"They hoy'd him out o' Lauderdale,
Fiddle an' a' thegither." *Scots Song.*

Hoyse. A pull upwards. Hoyse a creel, to raise a basket; hence "hoisting creels."

Hoyte. To amble crazily.

Hughoc. Diminutive of Hughie, as Hughie is of Hugh.

Hums and hankers. Mumbles, and seeks to do what he cannot perform.

Hunkers. Kneeling, and falling back on the hams.
"A hunker doddie" on the ice, is to be pushed along in that posture.

Hurcheon. A hedgehog.
"Owre a hill o' heckle teeth,
An' down a vale o' hurcheon hides."
Old Rhyme.

Hurdies. The loins, the crupper.
"Gaured a' their hurdies wallop." *Ramsay.*

Hushion, or *hoshen.* A cushion, also an old stocking with the foot, or sole of the foot, worn out.
"And sewed his saul up in a hoshen."
T. Cunningham.

Huchyalled. To move with a hilch.
"They mounted him high on a huchyalled horse."
Scots Rhyme.

I

Icker. An ear of corn.
"A daimen icker in a thrave." *Burns.*

Ieroe. A great grandchild.

Ilk, or *ilka.* Each, every.
"For ilka sheep ye hae I'll number ten." *Ramsay.*

Ill-willie. Ill-natured, malicious, niggardly.
"An ill-willy cow should have short horns."
Scots Proverb.

Ingie. Genius, ingenuity.
"For beautie, sweetness, modestie, ingine."
Drummond.

Ingle. Fire, fire-place.
"And some the haly ingle with them bare."
G. Douglas.

Ingle-low. Light from the fire, flame from the hearth.
"A bleezing ingle and a clean hearth stane."
Ramsay.

I rede ye. I advise ye, I warn ye.
"I rede ye, gude people, beware o' me."
Scots Song.

I'se. I shall, or will.
"But gin't be sae, Sir, I'se be judg'd by you."
Ross.

Ither. Other, one another.
"The deil's bairns are aye fain o' ither."
Scots Saying.

J

Jad. Jade; also a familiar term among country folks for a giddy young girl.
"Conscience, quo' I, ye thowless jad." *Burns.*

Jauk. To dally, to trifle.
"Get up, my muse, ye lazy jauker." *Fisher.*

Jauner. Talking, and not always to the purpose.
"You teaze me jaunering ay of faith."
Falls of Clyde.

Jaup. A jerk of water, to jerk, as agitated water.
"Is by the jaup of fludis couerit quite."
G. Douglas.

Jaw. Coarse raillery, to pour out, to shut, to jerk as water.
"Quhilk as thou seis with mony jaup and jaw."
G. Douglas.

Jillet. A jilt, a giddy girl.
"A jillet brak his heart at last." *Burns.*

Jimp. To jump, slender in the waist, handsome.
"And wha will lace my middle jimp." *Old Ballad.*

Jink. To dodge, to turn a corner; a sudden turning, a corner.

Jink an' diddle. Moving to music, motion of a fiddler's elbow.
Starting here and there with a tremulous movement.

Jinker. That turns quickly, a gay sprightly girl.
"Contend wi' thriftless mates or jinkers." *Ramsay.*

Jinkin'. Dodging, the quick motion of the bow on the fiddle.
"To dance wi' her where jinkin' fiddles play."
A. Scott.

Jirt. A jerk, the emission of water, to squirt.
Thus the poet says of fortune:
"She's gien me many a jirt an' fleg." *Burns.*

Jocteleg. A kind of knife.
"There's thretty pennies, gang and buy me a jocteleg." *Jamieson.*

Jouk. To stoop, to bow the head, to conceal.
"And joukit under the spere." *G. Douglas.*

Jow, to jow. The swinging motion and pealing sound of a large bell.
"The bells they jow'd and run." *Old Ballad.*

Jundie. To justle, a push with the elbow.
"If a man's gaun down the brae ilka ane gies him a jundie." *Scots Proverb.*

K

Kae. A daw.
"Bark like ane dog, and kekil like ane kae."
Lyndsay.

Kail. Colewort, a kind of broth.
"There's cauld kail in Aberdeen." *Scots Song.*

Kailrunt. The stem of a colewort.
"Fient haet o't wad hae pierced the heart
O' a kail-runt." *Burns.*

Kain. Fowls, &c., paid as rent by a farmer.
"Tho' they should dearly pay the kain."
Fergusson.

Kebars. Rafters.
"As it had been ane kebir or ane spar."
G. Douglas.

Kebbuck. A cheese.
"They'll stou the kebbuck to the heel."
Fergusson

Keckie. Joyous cry; to cackle as a hen.
"Coup her under a creel and put the keckling off her." *Scots Saying.*

Keek. A keek, to peep.
"Keek into the draw-well, Janet, Janet." *Ramsay.*

Kelpies. A sort of mischievous water-spirit, said to haunt fords and ferries at night, especially in storms.
"Gin kelpie be nae there." *Old Ballad.*

Ken. To know, *ken'd*, or *ken't*, knew, known.
"Ken ye whare cleekie Murray's gane." *Jacobite Reliques.*

Kennin. A small matter.
"Gif o' this world a kennin maer,
Some get than me." *Nicol.*

Kenspeckle. Well known.

Ket, ketty. Matted, a fleece of wool.
"The soil is said to be ketty when bound together with quickgrass." *Jamieson.*

Kiaugh. Carking, anxiety; to be in a flutter.
"Sae laughing and kiaughing,
Ye fain wad follow me." *Scots Song.*

Kilt. To truss up the clothes.
"I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee." *Scots Song.*

Kimmer. A young girl, a gossip.
"My kimmer an' I lay down to sleep." *Scots Song.*

Kin'. Kindred, kind.
"Began to reckon kin' and rent. *Scott.*

King's-hood. A certain part of the entrails of an ox.
"Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan." *Burns.*

Kintra, kintrie. Country; *Kintra-cooser*, country stallion.
"Keep the kintrie, bonnie lassie." *Scots Song.*

Kirn. The harvest supper, a churn.
"He reserved several handsful of the fairest corn for the harvest kirn." *Scots Story.*

Kirsen. To christen, to baptize.
"The morning dew had kirsen'd the young flowers." *Scots Story.*

Kist. Chest, a shop counter.
"He dunted the kist, an' the boards did flee." *Scots Song.*

Kitchen. Anything that eats with bread, to serve for soup, gravy.
"Better hae a louse i' the pot than nae kitchen." *Scots Proverb.*

Kith. Kindred.

Kittle. To tickle, ticklish.
"Or dread a kittle cast." *Ramsay.*

Kittling. A young cat.

Kintle, kintleing, or *kuittle.* To cuddle, cuddling, fondling.
"Sat kuittling wi' the maiden kimmer." *Scots Story.*

Knaggie. Like knags, or points of rocks.
"She said, where's my necklace? I've hung it, quo' he, on a knag." *Scots Presb. Eloq.*

Knap. To strike or break.

Knappin-hammer. A hammer for breaking stones.

Knurl. Dwarf.

Knurlin. Crooked but strong, knotty.
"A knurlin's ay a wurlin." *Scots Saying.*

Knowe. A small round hillock, a knoll.
"Ca' the yowes to the knowes." *Scots Song.*

Kye. Cows.
"Tydy kye lowis valis by them rennis." *G. Douglas.*

Kyte. The belly.
"Mony a weary day, but ne'er a fou kyte." *Scots Song.*

Kythe. To discover, to show one's self.
"His craftes gan he kythe." *Sir Tristrem.*

L

Labour. Thrash.
"And aften labour them completely." *Burns.*

Laddie. Diminutive of lad.
"I lo'e ne'er a laddie but ane." *Scots Song.*

Laggen. The angle between the side and the bottom of a wooden dish.
"And coost a laggen-gird myself." *Ramsay.*

Laigh. Low.
"Thai ewyn laich with the erde has made." *Wyntown.*

Lairing, lairie. Wading, and sinking in snow, mud, &c., miry.
"Carried me through the dub an' the lairie." *Scots Song.*

Laith. Loath, impure.
"Sic fischin to neglect they will be laith." *Lyndsay.*

Laithfu'. Bashful, sheepish, abstemious.
"A landward lad is ay laithfu'." *Scots Prov.*

Lallans. Scottish dialect, Lowlands.
"And scorned to own that Lalland sangs they knew." *A. Wilson.*

Lambie. Diminutive of lamb.
"For 'tweesh twa hillocks the poor lambie lies." *Ross.*

Lammas moon. Harvest moon.
"Light's heartsome, quo' the thief to the lammas moon." *Scots Proverb.*

Lan'. Land, estate.
"I wad gie a' my lands an' rents,
I had that lady within my stents." *Scots Ballad.*

Lan'-afore. Foremost horse in the plough.
"My lan'-afore's a wordy beast." *Burns.*

Lan-ahin'. Hindmost horse in the plough.
"My lan'-ahin's a weel gaun fillie." *Burns.*

Lane, lanely. Lone; *my lane, thy lane*, &c., myself alone; lonely.
"Lang hae I lain, my luve, lanely and eerie." *Scots Song.*

Lang. Long; *to think lang*, to long, to weary.
"He lede a lang tyme of his life." *Wyntown.*

Lap. Did leap.
"He lap quhill he lay on his lendis." *King James I.*

Late and air. Late and early
"They plague me air and late." *Scots Song.*

Lave. The rest, the remainder, the others.
"And the lave syne, that dede war thar." *Barbour.*

Laverock. The lark.
"An' the lift has faun an' smoored the lavrocks." *Scots Saying.*

Lawin'. Shot, reckoning, bill

Lawlan'. Lowland.
"The lawlan' lads think they are fine." *Scots Song.*

Lay my dead. Attribute my death.
"Should she refuse I'll lay my dead
To her twa e'en o' bonnie blue." *Burns.*

Lea-rig. Grassy ridge.

Leal. Loyal, true, faithful.
"Yere a lad baith true and leal,
The priest-cat ye winna steal." *Scots Rhyme.*

Lear. Learning, lore.

Lee-lang. Live-long.
"A' the lee-lang night I dim my een wi' weeping." *Scots Song.*

Leesome luve. Happy gladsome love.
"The tender heart o' leesome luve." *Burns.*

Leeze me. A phrase of congratulatory endearment; I am happy in thee, or proud of thee.
"Leeze me on liquor, my todlin dow." *Old Song.*

Leister. A three-pronged and barbed dart for striking fish.
"He could not conceive why a man should be put in fetters for leistering a salmon." *Cal. Mer.*

Leugh. Did laugh.
"The lordes on the tothir side for liking they leugh." *Gawan and Gol.*

Leuk. A look, to look.
"He leukit east, he leukit west." *Scots Ballads.*

Libbet. Castrated.
"Gif libbet Italy be singing." *Burns.*

Lick, licket. Beat, thrashen.
"To lend his loving wife a loundering lick." *Ramsay.*

Lift. Sky, firmament.
"High in the lift full glaide he gan behald." *G. Douglas.*

Lichtly, lightly. Sneeringly, to sneer at, to undervalue.
"His lychtly scorn he shall repent fu' sair." *Blind Harry.*

Lilt. A ballad, a tune, to sing.
"And Rosie lilts sweetly the 'milking the ewes.'" *Ramsay.*

Limmer. A kept mistress, a strumpet.
"Syne gart the limmers tak their heels." *Scots Ballad.*

Limpit. A kind of shell fish.

Limp't. Limped, hobbled.
"Them wha gae jumping awa aften come limpin back." *Scots Saying.*

Link. To trip along; *linkin'*, tripping along.
"Linkin' o'er the lea." *Old Song.*

Linn. A waterfall, a cascade.
"Sen owre the linn it came." *Montgomery.*

Lint. Flax; *lint i' the bell*, flax in flower.
"Now Bessie's hair's like a lint tap." *Ramsay.*

Lint-white. A linnet, flaxen.
"She lilts like ony lint-white." *Scots Saying.*

Loan. The place of milking.
"And muckle kye stand routing i' the loans." *Ramsay.*

Loaning. Lane.
"But now there's a moaning in ilka green loaning." *Old Song.*

Loof, looves. The palms of the hands.
"Wi' weel spread looves an' lang wry faces." *Burns.*

Loot. Did let.
"Loot a' his duddies fa'." *James V.*

Losh-man! Rustic exclamation modified from Lord man.
"Them that cry losh, fain wad cry Lord." *Scots Saying.*

Loun. A fellow, a ragamuffin, a woman of easy virtue.
"Quod I loun thou leis." *G. Douglas.*

Loup. Jump, leap, startled with pain.
"A loup rycht lychtly maid he than." *Barbour.*

Louper-like. Lan-louper, a stranger of a suspected character.
"A horse couper and a lan-louper." *Scots Rhyme.*

Lowe, lowin'. A flame; flaming; *lowin-drouth*, burning desire for drink.
"Then low or rek sall it discover." *Barbour.*
"A smith's hause is aye lowin." *Scots Prov.*

Lowrie Abbreviation of Lawrence.
"Then Lowrie as anc lyoun lap." *K. James.*

Lowse. To loose.
"They may bide in her window till Beltane ere I lowse them." *Scott.*

Lug. The ear, a handle.
"Ye canna mak a silk purse o' a sow's lug." *Scots Proverb.*

Lug of the law. At the judgment seat.
"Ye live at the lug of the law." *Scots Prov.*

Lugget. Having a handle.
"Ye've a lang nose, an' yet yere cut lugget." *Scots Proverb.*

Luggie. A small wooden dish with a handle.
"Wi' green horn spoons beech luggies mingle." *Ramsay.*

Lum. The chimney; *lum-head*, chimney top.
"An' clouds o' reek frae lum-heads do appear." *Ross.*

Lunch. A large piece of cheese, meat, &c.
"They may dunch that gie the lunch." *Scots Proverb.*

Lunt, lunting. A column of smoke, to smoke, to walk quickly; smoking.
"Auld Simon sat luntin' his cuttie." *A. Scott.*

Lyart. Of a mixed colour, grey.
"The bandsters are runkled, lyart, and grey." *Scots Song.*

M

Mae, mair, maist, maistly. More, most, almost, mostly.
"And break my pipe an' never whistle mair." *Ramsay.*

Maggot's-meat. Food for the worms.
"Wha I wish were maggot's meat." *Burns.*

Mahoun. Satan.
"Gramercy, tailor, said Mahoun." *Dunbar.*

Mailen. A farm.
"To take ane mailen that grit lawbour requyris. *Maitland.*

Mak'. To make; *makin'*, making.
"Gif e'er I hear ought o' your makin' mair." *Kennedy.*

Mally. Molly, Mary.
"Mally's meek, Mally's sweet, Mally's modest and discreet." *Scots Song.*

Mang. Among.
"Mang men, wae's heart, we aften find." *Fergusson.*

Manse. The house of the parish minister is called "the manse."

Manteele. A mantle.
"Mae than the diel wear a black manteel." *Scots Proverb.*

Mark. Marks. This and several other nouns, which, in English, require an *s* to form the plural, are, in Scotch, like the words sheep, deer, the same in both numbers.

Mark, merk. A Scottish coin, value thirteen shillings and fourpence.

Marled. Party coloured.
"They delight to wear marled clothes." *Monypenny.*

Mar's year. The year 1715. Called Mar's year from the Rebellion of Erskine, Earl of Mar.

Martial chuck. The soldier's camp-comrade, female companion.
"When up arose the martial chuck." *Burns.*

Mashlum. Mixed corn.
"Nae man shall presume to grind wheat, maisloch, or rye, with hand." *Statutes.*

Mask. To mash, as malt, &c., to infuse.
"They grind the malt over small in the miln that it will not run when it is masked."

Maskin-pat. Tea-pot.
"Then up they gat the maskin-pat." *Burns.*

Maukin. A hare.
"There's mair maidens than maukins." *Scots Proverb.*

Maun, mauna. Must, must not.
"My mother says I mauna." *Scots Song.*

Maut. Malt.
"I hae brewed a forpet o' maut." *Scots Song.*

Mavis. The thrush.
"The mavis frae the new-bloom'd thorn." *Fergusson.*

Maw, mawin'. To mow; mowing; *maun*, mowed; *maw'd*, mowed.
"In simmer I maw'd my meadow." *Scots Song.*

Mawn. A small basket without a handle.
"We'll cover him wi' a mawn, o'." *Scots Song.*

Meere. A mare.
"The auld man's meere's dead." *Old Song.*

Meikle. Much.

Melancholious. Mournful.
"Come join the melancholious croon,
O' Robin's reed." *Burns.*

Melder. Corn or grain of any kind, sent to the mill to be ground.
"Our simmer melder niest was milled." *Morison.*

Mell. To be intimate, to meddle; also a mallet for pounding barley in a stone trough.
"But Diomede mells aye wi' thee." *Scots Poem.*

Melvie. To soil with meal.
"Nor melvie his braw claithing." *Burns.*

Men'. To mend.
"Ye may en' him, but ye'll never men' him." *Scots Proverb.*

Mense. Good manners, decorum.
"Thair manhead and thair mense." *Priests of Peblis.*

Menseless. Ill bred, rude, impudent.
"As menseless as a tinkler's messan." *Scots Saying.*

Merle. The black-bird.
"Sic mirth the mavis and the merle couth mae." *Henryson.*

Messin. A small dog.
"He is our mekill to be your messoun." *Dunbar.*

Midden. A dunghill.
"Come lyk a sow out of a mydding." *Dunbar.*

Midden-hole. A gutter at the bottom of a dunghill.
"Beyond was the dungstead, with a pond of putrid water, termed the midden dub, into which the juices of the dung were collected." *Agricultural Survey.*

Middin-creels. Dung-baskets, panniers in which horses carry manure.
"Her waly neeves like midden creels." *Burns.*

Milkin-shiel. A place where cows or ewes are brought to be milked.
"It's a sma' sheal that gies nae shelter." *Scots Proverb.*

Mim. Prim, affectedly meek.
"As ony lamb as modest and as mim." *Ross.*

Mim-mou'd. Gentle-mouthed.
"A mim-mou'd cat is na guid mouser." *Scots Proverb.*

Min'. To remember; mind, remembrance.
"O dinna ye min' Lord Gregorie." *Old Ballad.*

Minawae. Minuet.
"She moves him in a minawae." *Scots Rhyme.*

Mind't. Mind it, resolved, intending, remembered.

Minnie. Mother, dam.
"Sin' that I was born of my minnie." *Evergreen.*

Mirk, mirkest. Dark, darkest.
"And the myrk nycht suddenly." *Wyntown.*

Misca'. To abuse, to call names; *misca'd*, abused.
"And Russel sair misca'd her." *Burns.*

Mischanter. Accident.
"Did sic a mishap and mischanter befa' me." *Ross.*

Mislear'd. Mischievous, unmannerly.
"Nor maun she be mislear'd." *Fergusson.*

Misteuk. Mistook.
"He misteuk
His neibor's pouch for his ain plaid neck." *Scots Poem.*

Mither. Mother.
"Quo Jock, an' laughing like to rive,
What think ye o' my mither?" *Ramsay.*

Mixtie-maxtie. Confusedly mixed, mish-mash.
"Yon mixtie-maxtie, queer hotch-potch." *Burns.*

Moistify, moistified. To moisten, to soak; moistened, soaked.
"Some are gay drouthy, but ye're aye moistified." *Scots Saying.*

Mons-meg. A large piece of ordnance, composed of iron bars welded together and then hooped.
"Oh willawins! Mons-meg for you." *Fergusson.*

Mools. Earth.
——"have seen the cauld-rife mools on thine." *Ramsay.*

Mony, or *Monie.* Many.
"Sure nature herried mony a tree." *Fergusson.*

Moop. To nibble as a sheep.
"The parings of their brede to moop up soon." *G. Douglas.*

Moorlan'. Of, or belonging to, moors.
"The wale o' our maidens is moorlan' Meg." *Scots Song.*

Morn. The next day, to-morrow.
"The fiest the fidler to morne." *G. Douglas.*

Mou'. The mouth.
"Wha thraw their mou's and tak the dorts." *Fergusson.*

Moudiwort. A mole.
"Ane may like to be luved, but wha wad mool in wi' a moudiewort?" *Scots Saying.*

Mousie. Diminutive of mouse.
"But mousie thou art no thy lane." *Burns.*

Muckle, or *mickle.* Great, big, much.
"There's mickle guid love in bonds and bags." *Ramsay.*

Muses-stank. Muses-rill, a stank, slow flowing water.
"And fand ane stank that flowed from ane well." *G. Douglas.*

Musie. Diminutive of muse.
"My musie tir'd wi' mony a sonnet." *Burns.*

Muslin-kail. Broth, composed simply of water, shelled barley, and greens—thin poor broth.
"Penny-wheep's guid enough for muslin-kale." *Scots Proverb.*

Mutchkin. An English pint.
"The mutchkin-stoup it hauds but dribs,
Sae bring us in the tappit-hen." *Ramsay.*

Mysel'. Myself.
"I winna blaw about mysel'." *Burns.*

N

Na, or *nae.* No, nor, not any.
"That on na manner micht accord." *Barbour.*

Naething, or *naithing.* Nothing.
"He had naething for to despend." *Barbour.*

Naig. A horse, a nag.
"On a' the Nith there's nae sic smith
For shoeing outher naig or gelding." *Scots Rhyme.*

Nane. None.
"Thus I declare the nane uncertaine thing." *G. Douglas.*

Nappy. Ale, to be tipsy.
"And when that the carles grew nappy." *Old Ballad.*

Negleckit. Neglected.
"But then to see how ye're negleckit." *Burns.*

Neibor, or *neebor.* A neighbour.
"An' aye sinsyne the neebors roun',
They jeer me air and late." *Scots Song.*

Neuk. Nook.
"The sun frae the east neuk o' Fife." *Ramsay.*

Niest. Next.
"A meaner phanton neist wi' meikle dread." *Ramsay.*

Nieve, nief. The fist.
"Hard on the left nief was the scharp stele hede." *G. Douglas.*

Nievefu'. Handful.
"A nievefu' o' meal or a gowpen o' groats." *Old Ballad.*

Niffer. An exchange, to exchange, barter.
"He's fond o' barter that niffers wi' auld Nick." *Scots Saying.*

Niger. A negro.
"That made Canaan a niger." *Burns.*

Nine-tailed cat. A hangman's whip.
"But haud ye're nine-tailed cat a wee." *Burns.*

Nit. A nut.
"Ye're owre fair o' flesh to live upon deaf nits." *Scots Saying.*

Norland. Of, or belonging to, the north.
"Was like the norlan' blast." *Scots Ballad.*

Notic't. Noticed.
"Them wha stand on a knowe 's sure to be notic't." *Scots Saying.*

Nowte. Black cattle.
"Als bestiall as horse and nowte within." *Blind Harry.*

O

O'. Of.
"I'm Willie o' the Wastle." *Scots Rhyme.*

Ochels. The name of mountains in Scotland.

O'ergang. Overbearingness, to treat with indignity, literally to tread.
"For fear that truth should clean o'ergang them." *Pennecuik.*

O'erlay. An upper cravat.
"He faulds his owrelay down his breast wi' care." *Ramsay.*

O'haith! O faith! An oath.

Ony, or *Onie.* Any.
"Gin there be ony that lykis." *Wyntown.*

Or. Is often used for ere, before.
"Wittail were scant or August cou'd appear." *Blind Harry.*

Orra-duddies. Superfluous rags, old clothes.
"To drink their orra-duddies." *Burns.*

O't. Of it.
"Jock will make a bridal o't." *Scots Song.*

Ourie. Drooping, shivering.
"The ourie cattle hang their heads." *Nicol.*

Oursel, oursels. Ourselves.
"There's nae sel sae dear as our ain sel." *Scots Proverb.*

Outlers. Outlyers; cattle unhoused.
"The deil, or else an outlier quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon." *Burns.*

Ower, owre. Over, too.
"Owre the water to Charlie." *Scots Song.*

Owre-hip. Striking with a fore-hammer by bringing it with a swing over the hip; a way of fetching a blow with the hammer over the arm.
"Brings hard owre hip wi' sturdy wheel,
The strang forehammer." *Burns.*

Owsen. Oxen.
"I hae three gude owsen ganging in a pleuch."
Scots Song.

Oxtered. Carried or supported under the arm.
"The priest he was oxtered, the clerk he was carried." *Scots Song.*

P

Pack. Intimate, familiar; twelve stone of wool.
"An' pack an' thick as tods could be." *Nicol.*

Paidle, paidlen. To walk with difficulty, as if in water.
"He's but a paidlen bodie O." *Old Song.*

Painch. Paunch.
"Pakand thair painch like Epicureans."
Scots Poem.

Paitrick. A partridge.
"An' paitricks scraichan loud at een." *Burns.*

Pang. To cram.
"As fou's the house could pang." *Ramsay.*

Parishen. Parish.

Parle. Courtship.
"A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parle."
Burns.

Parritch. Oatmeal pudding, a well-known Scotch dish.
"Frae the milk coggie or the parritch caup."
Fergusson.

Pat. Did put, a pot.
"Fier pat my heart in sic a flocht." *Burel.*

Pattle, or *pettle.* A small spade to clean the plough.
"I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murdering pettle." *Burns.*

Paughty. Proud, haughty.
"And pauchtie pride rycht sair I do detest."
Scots Poems.

Pauky, pawkie. Cunning, sly.
"A pauky auld carle cam o'er the lea."
King James V.

Pay't. Paid, beat.
"He's easily payt that's payt wi' paiks."
Scots Proverb.

Peat-reek. The smoke of burning turf, a bitter exhalation, whisky.
"Wi' gude peat-reek my head was light." *Duff.*

Pech, pechin'. To fetch the breath shortly, as in an asthma, respiring with difficulty.
"Begood to pech and limp behind." *Mayne.*

Pechan. The crop, the stomach.
"He puts in a bad purse that puts it in his pechan." *Scots Proverb.*

Pet. A domesticated sheep, &c., a favourite.
"The Deil's pet lambs lo'e Claverses lads."
Scots Saying.

Pettle. To cherish.
"An' pettle ye up a dainty lamb." *Scots Song.*

Philabeg, or *philibegs.* The kilt; short petticoats worn by Highlanders.
"Wi' his philabeg and tartan plaid." *Scots Song.*

Phraise. Fair speeches, flattery, to flatter.
"They need na mak sae great a phraise." *Skinner.*

Pibroch. A martial air.
"Heardst but the pibroch answering brave,
To many a target clanking round." *Scott.*

Pickle. A small quantity, one grain of corn.
"O gin my love were a pickle o' wheat."
Scots Song.

Pigmy-scraper. Little fiddler; a term of contempt for a bad player.
"A pigmy-scraper wi' his fiddle." *Burns.*

Pint-stoup. A two-quart measure.
"Some can stan' the sword better than the pint stoup." *Scots Proverb.*

Pine. Pain, uneasiness.
"In meikle dule and pine O." *Scots Song.*

Pingle. A small pan for warming children's sops.
"Ye want a pingle lassie weel and guid."
Scots Poem.

Pit. To put.

Placad. A public proclamation, to publish publicly.

Plack. An old Scotch coin, the third part of an English penny.
"He'll no mak his plack a bawbee." *Scots Prov.*

Plackless. Pennyless, without money.
"The case is clear my pouch is plackless." *Turras.*

Plaidie. Diminutive of plaid.
"Come under my plaidie and sit down beside me."
Macneill.

Platie. Diminutive of plate.
"Whyles owre the wee bit cup and platie." *Burns.*

Plew, or *pleugh.* A plough.
"At mornin when frae pleugh or fauld I come."
Fergusson.

Pliskie. A trick.
"Their lugs in onie rackless pliskie." *Nicol.*

Plumrose. Primrose.
"The plumrose and the snawdrap
Are the flowers that's dear to me."
Scots Song.

Pock. A meal-bag.
"Then she took up the meal pocks,
And flang them owre the wa'." *K. Jas. V.*

Poind. To seize on cattle, or take the goods as the laws of Scotland allow, for rent, &c.
"To pryk and poynd bathe to and fra."
Wyntown.

Poortith. Poverty.
"But poortith Peggy is the warst of a'." *Ramsay.*

Posie. A nosegay, a garland.
"I'll tie this posie round wi' the silken bands o' love." *Burns.*

Pou, pou'd, pou't. To pull, pulled.
"When Samson poud to ground the great pillare." *Blind Harry.*

Pouk. To pluck.
"And ay as they at the auld carlin plaid pouk."
Scots Song.

Poussie. A hare or cat.
"And morning poussie whidding seen." *Burns.*

Pouse. To pluck with the hand.
"Pride prinks her pow for the deil to pouse."
Scots Proverb.

Pout. A polt, a chick.
"O' woodcocks, teals, moor-powts, an' plivers."
Ramsay.

Pouthery, pouther, or *powther.* Fiery, active, like powder; gun-powder.
"Mounted on a pouthery pownie." *Scots Saying.*

Pow. The head, the skull.
"Abiet my pow was bald and bare." *Ramsay.*

Pownie. A little horse, a pony.
"He'll gang mad on a horse wha's proud on a pownie." *Scots Saying.*

Preclair. Super-eminent.
"More pleasand and preclair," *A. Scott.*

Preen. A pin.
"Thousands a year's no worth a preen." *Ramsay.*

Prent. Printing, print.
"That na prenter presume to prent anie books, balladis sangs." *Acts Marie.*

Prie. To taste; *prie'd,* tasted.
"That ye're awa', ae peaceful meal to prie."
Fergusson.

Prief. Proof.
"To prief thair horse with jauvelins in thair hands." *G. Douglas.*

Prig. To cheapen, to dispute; *priggin,* cheapening.
"I thought by priggin that she might hae spun," &c. *Fergusson.*

Primsie. Demure, precise.
"A primsie damsel maks a daidlen dame."
Scots Proverb.

Propone. To lay down, to propose.
"The poet first proponing his intent." *G. Douglas.*

Pund, pund o' tow. Pound, pound weight of the refuse of flax.
"But a' that she cou'd mak o' it
Was ae puir pund o' tow." *Scots Song.*

Pyet. A magpie.
"Thair were pyats, and paitricks, and plivers anew." *Scots Poem.*

Pyle, a pyle o' caff. A single grain of chaff.
"The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' chaff in." *Burns.*

Pystle. Epistle.
"An' penn'd a pretty pystle." *Scots Rhyme.*

Q

Quat. Quit.
"Come quat the grup ye tinkler loon."
Scots Song.

Quak, quakin'. Quack, the cry of a duck; to quake, quaking.
"When wi' an eldritch stoor quak, quak." *Burns.*

Quech. A drinking cup made of wood, with two handles.
"Never count the lawin wi a' toom quech."
Scots Proverb.

Quey. A cow from one to two years old, a heifer.
"A cannie quey maks a sonsie cow."
Scots Proverb.

Quines. Queans.
"It will cost the quine a skirling."
Scots Saying.

R

Ragweed. Herb-ragwort.
"As rank a witch as e'er rade on a ragweed."
Scots Saying.

Raible. To rattle, nonsense.
"There's plenty o' raible whan drink's on the table." *Scots Saying.*

Rair. To roar.
"Under thy feet the erd did rair and trymbil."
G. Douglas.

Raize. To madden, to inflame.
"And she ran aff as raised as ony deer."
Ross.

Ramfeezled. Fatigued, overspread.
"The tapetless ramfeezled hizzie." *Burns.*

Rampin'. Raging.
"The diel he heard the stour o' tongues,
And rampin' came amang us." *Old Song.*

Ramstam. Thoughtless, forward.
"The least we'll get if we gang ramstam in upon them." *Scott.*

Randie. A scolding sturdy beggar, a shrew.
"Was Rab the beggar randie." *Old Song.*

Rantin'. Joyous.
"They ca' me the rantin' laddie." *Old Song.*

Raploch. Properly a coarse cloth, but used for coarse.
"Thair clais quhilk wes of raploch grey."
Lyndsay.

Rarely. Excellently, very well.
"The sun it raise and better raise,
And owre the hill lowed rarely." *Old Song.*

Rash. A rush; *rash-buss*, a bush of rushes.
"Becaus the rasche-buss keipis his kow."
Lyndsay.

Ratton. A rat.
"Thocht rattones ouer them rin, they tak na care." *Lyndsay.*

Raucle. Rash, stout, fearless, reckless.
"O rakel hond to do so foule a mis."
Chaucer.

Raught. Reached.
"Swith swelleand that morsel raucht had sche." *G. Douglas.*

Raw. A row.
"He driues forth the stampand hors on raw."
G. Douglas.

Rax, rax'd. To stretch; stretched.
"Begoud to rax and rift." *Ramsay.*

Ream. Cream, to cream.
"Without ream, sugar and bohea." *Ramsay.*

Reamin'. Brimful, frothing.
"He merely ressauis the remand tais."
G. Douglas.

Reave. Take by force, rove.
"To rieffe that crown that is a great outrage."
Blind Harry.

Rebute. To repulse, rebuke.
"That I rebutet was and doung abak."
G. Douglas.

Reck. To heed.
"There's little to reck, quo' the knave to his neck." *Scots Saying.*

Rede. Counsel, to counsel, to discourse.
"And for I think off him to rede." *Barbour.*

Red-peats. Burning turfs.
"A toom tar-barrel and twa red peats." *Burns.*

Red-wat-shod. Walking in blood over the shoe-tops.
"In tyrants' blood walked red-wat-shod."
Scots Poem.

Red-wud. Stark mad.
"Some are only daft, but yere red-wud raving." *Scots Saying.*

Ree. Half drunk, fuddled; *a ree yaud*, a wild horse.
"Ye love a' ye see, like Rob Roole when he's ree." *Scots Saying.*

Reek, reekin, reekit. Smoke, smoking, smoked, smoky.
"A reekit wee devil looked over the wa'."
Scots Song.

Reestit. Stood restive; stunted, withered.
"It was a bogilly bit: the horse saw something, and snorted and reestit."
Scots Story.

Remead. Remedy.
"All makes for the ruin of this isle, and I see yet no means to remied it." *Baillie.*

Reef, rief. Plenty.

Requite. Requited.
"A drap and a bite's a sma' requite."
Scots Saying.

Rest, restit. To stand restive; stood restive, stunted, withered.

Restricked. Restricted.

Rew. To smile, look affectionately, tenderly.
"Rew on me, true Thomas, she said."
Thomas the Rhymer.

Rickles. Shocks of corn, stooks.
"A pickle's no mist in a rickle."
Scots Saying.

Riddle. Instrument for purifying corn.
"The dumb riddle, the coarse riddle, and the fine riddle." *Farmer's Inventory.*

Rief-randies. Men who take the property of others, accompanied by violence and rude words, sturdy beggars.
"Rief-randies, I disown ye." *Burns.*

Rig. A ridge.
"Quhare thou thy riggis telis for to saw."
G. Douglas.

Rin. To run, to melt; *rinnin'*, running.
"Whare will I get a bonnie boy
My errant for to rin." *Scots Ballad.*

Rink. The course of the stones, a term in curling on ice.
"Be this they wan near to the renkis end."
G. Douglas.

Rip. A handful of unthreshed corn.
"Hae there's a rip to thy auld baggie."
Burns.

Ripples. Pains in the back and loins, sounds which usher in death.
"I rede ye beware of the ripples, young man."
Old Song.

Ripplin-kame. Instrument for dressing flax.
"Lassie, lend me your braw hemp heckle,
"An' I'll lend you my ripplin-kame."
Scots Song.

Riskit. A noise like the tearing of roots.
"While spretty knowes just raired an' riskit."
Burns.

Rockin'. A denomination for a friendly visit. In former times young women met with their distaffs during the winter evenings, to sing, and spin, and be merry; these were called "rockings."

Roke. Distaff.
"The roke and the wee pickle tow."
Scots Song.

Rood. Stands likewise for the plural, roods.

Roon. A shred, the selvage of woollen cloth.
"The best o' webs is rough at the roons."
Scots Saying.

Roose. To praise, to commend.
"Come view the men thou likes to roose."
Ramsay.

Roun'. Round, in the circle of neighbourhood.
"The king lies doun, yet the warl rins roun'."
Scots Saying.

Roup. A sale by auction.

Roupet. Hoarse, as with a cold.
"O may the roup ne'er roost thy weason."
Beattie.

Routh, routhie. Plenty, plentiful.
"I dinna want a rowth o' country fare."
Ramsay.

Routh o' gear. Plenty of goods.

Row, row't. To roll, to wrap, to roll as water; rolled, wrapped.
"Rowet at ains with stormes and windis thre."
G. Douglas.

Rowte, rowtin'. To low, to bellow; lowing.
"Frae faulds na mair the owsen rowte."
Fergusson.

Rozet. Rosin.
"Full of roset doun bet is the fir tree." *G. Douglas.*

Rue. Regret, repent.
Rumble-gumption. Rough common sense.
"Ye suld hae stayed at hame, and wantit a wife till ye got mair rumble-gumption." *Hogg.*
Run-deils. Downright devils.
"Jock's a mislear'd imp, but ye're a run-deil." *Scots Saying.*
Rung. A cudgel.
"Quhen rungy's wes laid on riggis." *King James.*
Runt. The stem of colewort or cabbage.
"Bairns, when ye are weary digging, ye can pou kale runts." *Scots Saying.*
Runkled. Wrinkled.
"A moupin runkled granny." *Ramsay.*
Ruth. A woman's name, sorrow.
"I'the book o' truth there's love and ruthe." *Scots Saying.*
Ryke. Reach.
"Let me ryke up to dight that tear." *Burns.*

S

Sae. So.
"Sae thrang this day." *Fergusson.*
Saft. Soft.
"Saft ease shall teach you to forget." *Old Song.*
Sair. To serve, a sore; *sairie*, sorrowful; *sairly*, sorely; *sair't*, served.
"He has a saw for a' sairs." *Scots Proverb.*
Sark. A shirt.
"Held on his sark, and tuk his suerd so gud." *Barbour.*
Sarkit. Provided in shirts.
"But here half mad, half fed, half sarkit." *Burns.*
Saugh. Willow.
"He rules easier wi' a saugh wand than a sharp brand." *Scots Saying.*
Saugh woodies. Withies, made of willows, now supplanted by ropes and chains.
"The sonks o' his yaud war tyed wi' saugh widdies." *Scots Story.*
Saul. Soul.
"An' lous the saul out of this mortall state." *G. Douglas.*
Saumont. Salmon.
"He kens nae a selgh frae a saumont." *Scots Proverb.*
Saunt. Saint.
"Ilka name has a saunt, save that auldest ane sinner." *Scots Proverb.*
Saut, sautit. Salt, salted.
"And get their tails weel sautit." *Fergusson.*
Saw, sawin'. To sow; sowing.
"In fragil flesche your feebill sede is saw'n." *Douglas.*
"Hope is sawin while death is mawin." *Scots Proverb.*
Sax. Six.
"Sax score o' lambs I sauld them ilka clute." *Ramsay.*
Scaith. To damage, to injure, injury.
Scaud. To scald.
"Ye had better get a scaud than a scouther." *Scots Proverb.*
Scauld, seawl. To scold; a scold.
"My Eppie's tongue I vow its sweet,
E'en though she flytes an' scaulds a wee." *Scots Song.*
Scaur. Apt to be scared; a precipitous bank of earth which the stream has washed red.
"That chafes against the scaur's red side." *Sir W. Scott.*
Scone. A kind of bread.
"The floure skounys were set in by and by." *Douglas.*
Sconner. A loathing, to loath.
"We sconner at most parts o' meat." *Cleland.*
Scraich and *Scriegh.* To scream, as a hen or partridge.
"It is time enough to screigh when ye're strucken." *Scots Proverb.*
Screed. To tear, a rent; *screeding*, tearing.
"Screeding of kerches, crying dool and dair." *Ross.*
Scrieve, scrieven. To glide softly; gleesomely along, swiftly.
"And owre the hill gaed scrieven." *Burns.*
Scrimp. To scant; *scrimpet*, scanty.
"There's Johnnie Trams has got a wife,
That scrimps him in his cogie." *Scots Song.*
Scroggie. Covered with underwood, bushy.
"Amang the braes sae scroggie."
Sculdudrey. Fornication.
"Could sa'r sculdudrey out like John." *Ramsay.*
Seed. Saw, did see.
Seizin'. Seizing.
Sel'. Self; *a body's sel'*, one's self alone.
"Sel'! sel'! has peopled hell." *Scots Proverb.*
Sell't. Did sell, sold.
"He sell't his saul for a cracket sixpence." *Scots Saying.*
Sen', sen't. To send, sent, or did send.
"An' then she'll sen' ye to the deil." *Scots Song.*
Servan'. Servant.
"Godliness is great gain, but sin keeps mony a servan'." *Scots Saying.*
Settlin'. Settling; *to get a settlin'*, to be frightened into quietness."
"She gat a fearfu' settlin'." *Burns.*
Sets, sets off. Goes away.
Shachlet-feet. Ill-shaped.
"Ye shape shoon by your ain shacklet-feet." *Scots Proverb.*
Shair'd. A shred, a shard.
"Ye're grown a skrinkie an' a shaird." *Scots Saying.*
Shangan. A stick cleft at one end for pulling the tail of a dog, &c., by way of mischief, or to frighten him away.
"Like collie wi' a shangan." *Davidson.*
Shank-it. Walk it; *shanks*, legs.
"Them that canna ride maun shank it." *Scots Saying.*
Shaul. Shallow.
"Shaul water's never smooth." *Scots Proverb.*
Shaver. A humorous wag, a barber.
"He was an unco shaver
For mony a day." *Burns.*
Shavie. To do an ill turn.
"I played my filly sic a shavie." *Burns.*
Shaw. To shew; a small wood in a hollow place.
"Amang the shaws are nuts and haws." *Scots Rhyme.*
Sheen. Bright, shining.
Sheep-shank. To think one's self nae sheep-shank; to be conceited.
"He has gowd in the bank, an' he's nae sheep-shank." *Scots Rhyme.*
Sherra-muir. Sherriff-muir, the famous battle of, 1715.
"Sherra-muir was but a cock fight till't." *Scots Saying.*
Sheugh. A ditch, a trench, a sluice.
"The ciete circulet, and markit be ane seuch [Sheugh]." *G. Douglas.*
Shiel, shealing. A shed, a shepherd's cottage.
"Ten miles frae ony town this shealing lies." *Ross.*
Shill. Shrill.
"A miller's daughter has a' a shrill voice." *Scots Proverb.*
Shog. A shock, a push off at one side.
"Gien earth a shog, and made thy will a law." *Ramsay.*
Shoo. Ill to please, ill to fit.
"Then, daughter, ye should na be sae ill to shoo." *Old Song.*
Shool. A shovel.
"Let spades an' shools do what they may,
Dryfe will hae Dryfesdale Kirk away." *Old Rhyme.*
Shoon. Shoes.
"Where can I get a bonny boy
That will win hose and shoon." *Scots Ballad.*
Shore, snor'd. To offer, to threaten; offered and threatened.
"When she disna scaul she shores." *Scots Saying.*
"He shored the dog, an' then he shot at it." *Scots Story.*
Shouther. The shoulder.
"Shouther to shouther stands steel an' pouther." *Scots Saying.*

Shot. One traverse of the shuttle from side to side of the web.
"He has nae put in a single shot i' the wab this blessed day." *Scots Story.*

Sic. Such.
"Sic like a Robin Hood debates." *Fergusson.*

Sicker. Sure, steady.
"Out thourch his ribs a sicker straik he drew." *Barbour.*
"I mak sicker." *Motto of the Kirkpatrick Arms.*

Sidelins. Sideling, slanting.
"For Nory's sake this sideling hint he gae." *Ross.*

Silken-snood. A fillet of silk, a token of virginity.
"The lassie lost her silken snood,
Which cost her mony a blirt and bleary." *Scots Song.*

Siller. Silver, money, white.
"Her e'en were o' the siller sheen." *Fergus.*

Simmer. Summer.
"O' simmer's showery blinks, and winter sour." *Fergusson.*

Sin. A son, since.
"There's mirth 'mang the kin when the kimmer cries a sin." *Scots Proverb.*

Sin syne. Since then.
"It's no that lang sin syne." *Scots Poem.*

Skaith. To damage, to injure, injury.
"And kisses laying a' the wyte
On you if she keep ony skaith." *Ramsay.*

Skeigh. Proud, nice, saucy, mettled.
"She's skiegh, but she winna skriegh." *Scots Saying.*

Skellum. A noisy, reckless fellow.
"She tauld thee weel thou wert a skellum." *Burns.*

Skelp. To strike, to slap; to walk with a smart tripping step, a smart stroke.
"And laid on skelp for skelp." *Lyndsay.*

Skelpi-limmer. A technical term in female scolding.
"Ye little skelpi-limmer's face." *Burns.*

Skelpin, skelpit. Striking, walking rapidly; literally, striking the ground.
"I cam to a place where there had been some clean skelping." *Scott.*
"A skelpit bottom breaks nae banes." *Scots Saying.*

Skinklin. Thin, gauzy, scaltery, a small portion.
"Squire Pope but busks his skinklin-patches." *Burns.*

Skirl, Skirling. To cry, to shriek shrilly, shrieking, crying.
"Sitting skirling on a cauld brae side." *Scott.*

Skirl't. Shrieked.
"I skirl't fu' loud, 'Oh! wae befa' thee.'" *Fergusson.*

Sklent. Slant, to run aslant, to deviate from truth.
"Of drawin' swords sklenting to and fra." *Douglas.*

Sklented. Ran, or hit, in an oblique direction.
"The draps sklented off like rain from a wild duck's wing." *Scots Saying.*

Skouth. Vent, free action.
"The rain comes skouth when the win's i' the south." *Scots Saying.*

Skreigh. A scream, to scream, the first cry uttered by a child.
"For what wad gar her skirl and skreigh some day." *Ramsay.*

Skyte. A worthless fellow, to slide rapidly off.
"He's a selfish skyte that cares but for his kyte." *Scots Saying.*

Skyrin. Party coloured, the checks of the tartan.
"And a' the skyrin brins o' light." *Scots Poem.*

Slae. Sloe.
"Ane buss of bitter slaes." *Montgomery.*

Slade. Did slide.
"The wife slade cannie to her bed." *Burns.*

Slap. A gate, a breach in the fence.
"He's a sharp tyke that can catch at every slap." *Scots Proverb.*

Slaw. Slow.
"The feet are slaw when the head wears snaw." *Scots Saying.*

Slee, sleest. Sly, slyest.
"Or Fergusson the bauld and slee." *Burns.*

Sleekit. Sleek, sly.
"He's an auld farrant sleekit bodie." *Scots Story.*

Sliddery. Slippery.
"He slaid and stammerit on the sliddry ground." *G. Douglas.*

Slip-shod. Smooth shod.
"Slip shod's no for a frozen road." *Scots Saying.*

Sloken. Quench, slake.
"To keep the life, but not to sloken thirst." *Hudson.*

Slype, slypet. To fall over; fell over, with a slow reluctant motion.
"Till spretty knowes just-raired and risket,
And slypet owre." *Burns.*

Sma'. Small.
"Though my fortune be but sma'." *Scots Song.*

Smeddum. Dust, powder, mettle, sense, sagacity.
"Has fowth o' sense an' smeddum in her." *Skinner.*

Smiddy. A smithy.
"Sae I joined the smiddy thrang." *A. Scott.*

Smirking. Good-natured, winking.

Smoor, smoored. To smother, smothered.
"That his hie honour should not smure." *Lyndsay.*

Smoutie. Smutty, obscene; *smoutie phiz*, sooty aspect.
"The smoultrie smith, the swart Vulcanus." *English Poem.*

Smytrie. A numerous collection of small individuals.
"A smytrie o' wee duddie weans." *Burns.*

Snapper. Mistake, stumble.
"He's never out o' ae whipper-snapper till he's into anither."

Snash. Abuse, Billingsgate, impertinence.
"The tither says I'll hae't, an' that right snash." *Morison.*

Snaw, snawie. Snow, to snow, snowy.
"He's ane o' Snaw-ba's bairntime." *Scots Saying.*

Snaw-broo. Melted snow.
"The river, swelled wi' snaw-broo, was raging frae bank to brae." *Scots Story.*

Sned. To lop, to cut off.
"It is good that God snedde the unfruitful and rotten branches." *Boyd.*

Sned-besoms. To cut brooms.
"But I'll sned besoms, thraw saugh woodies
Before they want." *Burns.*

Sneeshin. Snuff; *sneeshing-mill*, a snuff-box.
"Or else they are not worth a sneeshin." *Meston.*

Snell and *snelly.* Bitter, biting; *snellest*, bitterest.
"Not Boreas that sae snelly blaws." *Fergusson.*

Snick, or *sneck.* The latchet of a door.
"Just lift the sneck, and say peace be here." *Scots' Advice*

Snick-drawing. Trick contriving.
"Then you, ye auld snic-drawing dog." *Burns*

Snirt, snirtle. Concealed laughter, to breathe through the nostrils in a displeased manner.
"Now let her snirt and fyke her fill." *Herd.*

Snool. One whose spirit is broken with oppressive slavery; to submit tamely, to sneak.
"Our dotard dads, snool'd wi' their wives." *Ramsay.*

Snoove. To go smoothly and constantly, to sneak.
"The naigs snooved awa', and the furrow fell owre like a ribbon." *Scots Story.*

Snowk, snowkit. To scent or snuff as a dog, scented, snuffed.
"The drink and eke the offerings great and small,
Snokis and likis." *G. Douglas.*

Sodger. A soldier.
"On town guard sodgers' faces." *Fergusson.*

Sonsie. Having sweet engaging looks, lucky, jolly.
"Sonsie and cantie and gausie." *Old Song.*

Soom. To swim.
"He'll soom wi' the stream, gae contrair wha will."

Sooth. Truth, a petty oath.

Sough. A sound dying on the ear, or a continued sound like the noise of high wind.

Souk. To suck, to drink long and enduringly.
"And aye she took the tither sook
To drouck the stowrie tow." *Scots Song.*

Souple, Soupled. Flexible, swift; suppled.
"As he rins he grows warm, an' as he grows warm he gets soupled, and then ye canna cast saut on his tail." *Scots Saying.*
"The eel, fu' souple, wags her tail." *Fergus.*

Souther, sowther. To solder.
"Ye hae cowpit the southering pan, my lass." *Scots Song.*

Souter. A shoemaker.
"Up wi' the souters o' Selkirk."
Scots Song.

Sowens. A dish made of oatmeal; the seeds of oatmeal soured, &c., boiled up till they make an agreeable pudding.
"And sowens and farles and baps." *Scots Song.*

Sowp. A spoonful, a small quantity of anything liquid.
"A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink." *Burns.*

Sowth. To try over a tune with a low whistle.
"The soft sowth of the swyre and sound of the streams." *Dunbar.*

Spae. To prophecy, to divine.
"For thoch sho spayit the soith." *G. Douglas.*

Spails. Chips, splinters.
"Some strikkit thraw the coist with the spalis of tree." *G. Douglas.*

Spairge. To clash, to soil, as with mire.
"Spairges about the brunstane cootie."
Burns.

Spates. Swollen streams.
"The burne on spate hurls down the bank."
G. Douglas.

Spaul. A limb.
"Auld Sathan claught him by the spaul."
Jacobite Relics.

Spaviet. Having the spavin.
"Ye winna men' a spaviet horse wi' a braw bridle." *S. P.*

Speat, spates. A sweeping torrent after the rain or thaw; sudden floods.
"Unguarded was the hallan gate,
And Whigs poured in like Nith in spate."
Jacobite Relics.

Speel. To climb.
"I hope to speel a higher tree,
"And herry a richer nest." *Scots Song.*

Spence. The parlour of a farm house or cottage.
"Intil a spense where victual was plentye."
Henryson.

Spier. To ask, to enquire; *spier't*, inquired.
"Whare do ye win, gin ane may spier."
Fergusson.

Spinnin-graith. Wheel and roke and lint.
"Then Meg took up the spinning-graith."
Burns.

Splatter, To splutter, a splutter.
"There's an unco' splutter, quo' the sow in the gutter." *Scots Saying.*

Spleughan. A tobacco pouch.
"Ilk chiel screwed up his dogskin spleuchan." *Davidson.*

Splore. A frolic, noise, riot.
"We have had some bits o' splores thegither."
Scott.

Sprachled. Scrambled.
"Came spraughlin in a hurry out."
Mactaggart.

Sprattle. To scramble.
"And making a sprattle for your life." *Scott.*

Spreckled. Spotted, speckled.
"The spreckled mavis greets your ear."
Fergusson.

Spring. A quick air in music, a Scottish reel.
"Playand on his harp of Trace sa pleasand springis." *Douglas.*

Sprit, spret. A tough-rooted plant, something like rushes, jointed-leaved rush.
"The ground is for the most part covered with sprit." *Trans. Highland Society.*

Sprittie. Full of spirits.
"He was lying in a little green spretty hollow." *Scots Story.*

Spunk. Fire, mettle, wit, spark.
"Is nocht left in ane spunk." *Godly Songs.*

Spunkie. Mettlesome, fiery; will o' the wisp, or ignis fatuus; the devil.
"He'll get a begunkie that lippens to spunkie." *Scots Saying.*

Spurtle. A stick used in making oatmeal pudding or porridge, a notable Scottish dish.
"Ane spurtle braid, and ane elwand."
Bannatyne Poems.

Squad. A crew or party, a squadron.
"The same day the council ordered out a squad of the guards." *Wodrow.*

Squatter. To flutter in water, as a wild duck, &c.
"Syne squaterit down into the sea." *Lyndsay.*

Squattle. To sprawl in the act of hiding.
"Swith in some beggars haffit squattle."
Burns.

Squeel. A scream, a screech, to scream.
"I trow he gaured the kimmers squeel."
Scots Song.

Stacher. To stagger.
"Like a stirk stacharand in the rye."
Dunbar.

Stack. A rick of corn, hay, peats.
"A peat stack at the door to keep a ranting fire." *Old Song.*

Staggie. Diminutive of stag.
"An' could hae flown like ony staggie."
Burns.

Staig. A two year old horse.
"Quhiles, thou stall staigs and stirks."
G. Douglas.

Stalwart. Stately, strong, stout.
"Now strong Gyane now stalwart Cloantheus."
Douglas.

Stang. Sting, stung.
"In herrying o' a bee bike I hae got a stang."
Scots Song.

Stan't. To stand; *stan't*, did stand.
"I canna stan't, I canna stan't; taking my siller is like taking my heart's blude."
Scots Story.

Stane. A stone.
"Sum strack with stingis, sum gadderit stanes." *King James.*

Stank. A pool of standing water, slow moving water.
"And fand ane stank that flowit from ane well." *Douglas.*

Stap. Stop, stave.
"I'll take a stap out o' your cog."
Scots Saying.

Stark. Stout, potent.
"Stark mighty wines and small wines."
Aberdeen Records.

Startle. To run as cattle stung by the gadfly.
"That gars thee startle." *Burns.*

Staukin. Stalking, walking disdainfully, walking without an aim.
"He gangs staup staukin, and yet he's wide waking."

Staumrel. A blockhead, half-witted.
"A full staumrel is half a gomeral."
Scots Saying.

Staw. Did steal, to surfeit.
"We'll staw'd wi' them, he'll never spier."
Fergusson.

Stech, stechin. To cram the belly; cramming.
"His father stecht his fortune in his wame."
Ramsay.
"There's meat and drink, and sae stech yoursels well." *A Scotch Exhortation.*

Steek. To shut, a stitch.
"Whan thrasher John, sair dung, his barn-door steeks." *Fergusson.*

Steer. To molest, to stir.
"Steer her up and haud her gaun."
Scots Song.

Steeve. Firm, compacted.
"As hot as ginger, and as steeve as steel."
Robertson.

Stell. A still.
"Her nainsel does as gude as keep a sma' stell." *Scots Story.*

Sten, sten't. To rear as a horse, to stride, to leap suddenly; reared.
"'My heart to my mou gied a sten." *Burns.*

Stravagin. Wandering without an aim.
"He has gi'en up a trade and ta'en to stravagin." *Scots Saying.*

Stents. Tribute, dues of any kind.
"To tax and stent the hale inhabitants within the Parochin." *Acts James VI.*

Stey. Steep; *styest*, steepest.
"Set a stout heart to a stey brae."
Scots Proverb.

Stibble. Stubble: *stubble rig*, the reaper in harvest who takes the lead.
"Shod i' the cradle and barefoot i' the stubble." *Scots Proverb.*

Stick-an'-stow. Totally, altogether.
"Which gin I gie you stick-an'-stow."
Sheriffs.

Stilt, stilts. A crutch; to limp, to halt; poles for crossing a river.
"The Dunscore salt lairds stilt the Nith."
Scots Song.

Stimpart. The eighth part of a Winchester bushel.
"Them that canna get a peck maun pit up wi' a stimpart." *Scots Saying.*

Stirk. A cow or bullock a year old.
"Our stirks and young beistis mony ane."
G. Douglas.

Stock. A plant of colewort, cabbages.
"A body's no broke while they hae a green kale-stock." *Scots Proverb.*

Stockin'. Stocking; throwing the stockin'; when the bride and bridegroom are put into bed, and the candle out, the former throws a stocking at random among the company, and the person whom it falls on is the next that will be married.

Stook, stooked. A shock of corn, made into shocks.
"And when its a' cut I'll stook it wi' pleasure."
Galloway.

Stoor. Sounding hollow, strong, and hoarse.

Stot. A young bull, or ox.
"Semin young stottis, that yoik bare neuir nane." *Douglas.*

Stound. Sudden pang of the heart.
"So tyl hys heart stoundis the pryk of death."
G. Douglas.

Stoup, or *stowp.* A kind of high narrow jug or dish with a handle, for holding liquids.
"Freyr Robert sayd, dame, fill ane stoup of ale."
Dunbar.

Stoure. Dust; more particularly dust in motion; *stourie,* dusty.
"The strang stowre raise like reek amang them fast." *Blind Harry.*

Stownlins. By stealth.
"And stownlins when there was na thinking."
Nicol.

Stown. Stolen.
"Aft tymis gear tynt or stowin is getten agane be conjurers." *Hamilton.*

Stoyte. The walking of a drunken man, stumble.
"He gies mony a stoyte, but never a tumble."
Scots Saying.

Strack. Did strike.
"He had the same sword in keeping that strak the field o' Flodden." *Pitscottie.*

Strae. Straw; *to die a fair strae death,* to die in bed.
"And out he drew his gude brown sword
And straket it on the strae." *Old Ballad.*

Straik. To stroke; *straiket,* stroked.
"That straykes thir wenches hedis them to please." *G. Douglas.*

Strappan, strappin'. Tall, handsome, vigorous.
"The English minister proposed to hire a band of strapping Elliotts." *Scott.*

Strath. Low alluvial land, a holm.
"A strath is a flat piece of arable land lying along the side or sides of some capital river." *Burt.*

Straught. Straight.
"Hand of woman or of man either will never straught him." *Scott.*

Streek. Stretched, to stretch.
"Nane o't she wyled but forward on did streek."
Ross.

Striddle. To straddle.
"Lads like to striddle to the soun' o' the fiddle."
Scots Rhyme.

Stroan. To spout.
"An' stroaned on stanes and hillocks wi' him."
Burns.

Stroup. The spout.
"O haste ye an' come to our gate en'
And sowther the stroup o' my lady's pan."

Studdie. The anvil.
"Item, three iron studdies and ane cruke studdie."
Inventory.

Stumpie. Diminutive of stump; a grub pen.
"And down gade stumpie in the ink." *Burns.*

Strunt. Spirituous liquor of any kind; to walk sturdily, to be affronted.
"Gif ony wayward lassie tak' the strunt."
Scots Poem.

Stuff. Corn or pulse of any kind.
"And snodly cleaned the stuff." *Tarras.*

Sturt. Trouble; to molest.
"To sturt them on the streme fra hand to hand."
Douglas.

Startin. Frighted.
"When death lifts the curtain its time to be startin'." *Scots Proverb.*

Styme. A glimmer.
"Suppose thou sees her not a styme."
Montgomery.

Sucker. Sugar.
"An' just a wee drap spiritual burnin'
And gusty sucker." *Burns.*

Sud. Should.
"That you sud musing gae." *Fergusson.*

Sugh, or *sough.* The continued rushing noise of wind or water.
"Cald blaws the nippin' north wi' angry sugh."
Fergusson.

Sumph. A pluckless fellow, with little heart or soul.
"Surveys the self-made sumph in proper light."
Ramsay.

Suthron. Southern, an old name for the English nation.
"A southern there he slew at every stroke."
Blind Harry.

Swaird. Sword.
"Yere a fine swaird, quo the fule to the wheat braird." *Scots Saying.*

Swall'd. Swelled.
"Its a world's pity to see how these rings are pinching the poor creature's swalled fingers." *Scott.*

Swank. Stately, jolly.
"Mair hardy, souple, steeve and swank."
Fergusson.

Swankie or *Swanker.* A tight strapping young fellow or girl.
"At een in the gloamin'
Nae swankies are roamin'." *Scots Song.*

Swap. An exchange, to barter.
"I trou we swappit for the warse." *Old Song.*

Swarfed. Swooned.
"The scene dumfoundered the wretch, and swarfed him sae that he could not utter a word." *Mactaggart.*

Swat, sweatin'. Did sweat, sweating.
"They swat like ponies when they speel
Up braes, or when they gallop." *Ramsay.*

Swatch. A sample.
"A swatch—a pattern, or piece for a sample."
Sinclair.

Swats. Drink, good ale, new ale or wort.
"Nor kept dow'd tip within her waas
But reamin' swats." *Ramsay.*

Sweer. Lazy, averse; dead-sweer, extremely averse.
"Deferred hopes needna make me dead sweer."
Rutherford.

Swoor. Swore, did swear.

Swinge. To beat, to whip.
"Swynget and faught full sturdeley." *Barbour.*

Swinke. To labour hard.
"To swinke and sweat withouten meat or wage."
Henrysone.

Swirl. A curve, an eddying blast or pool, a knot in wood.
"The swelland swirl uphesit us to heauen."
Douglas.

Swirlie. Knaggy, full of knots.
"He taks a swirlie auld moss aik,
For some black gruesome carlin." *Burns.*

Swith. Get away.
"Swith roast a hen an' fry some chickens."
Ramsay.

Swither. To hesitate in choice, an irresolute wavering in choice.

Syebow. A thick-necked onion.
"Wi' syebows, an' rifarts, and carlins."
Scots Song.

Syne. Since, ago, then.
"The meal was dear short syne." *Scots Song.*

T

Tackets. Broad-headed nails for the heels of shoes.
"Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets."
Burns.

Tae. A toe; *three-taed;* having three prongs.
"Owre mony masters, quo' the toad to the harrows, when every tae gied him a tig."
Scott.

Tak. To take; *takin'*, taking.
"They tak the horse then by the head."
Scots Song.

Tamtallan. The name of an old castle or fortress, on the coast of East Lothian.

Tangle. A sea-weed, used as salad.
"Scraped haddocks, wilks, dulse, and tangle."
Scots Song.

Tap. The top.
"I'll tak my tap in my lap and rin." *Scott.*

Tapetless. Heedless, foolish.
"That she grew tapetless and swarft therewith."
Ross.

Targe. *Targe them tightly*, cross question them severely.

Tairge. Target.

Tarrow, tarrow't. To murmur at one's allowance; murmured.
"A tarrowing bairn was never fat."
Scots Proverb.

Tarry-breeks. A sailor.
"Tarry breeks are toom when tartan trews are fou." *Scots Proverb.*

Tassie. A small measure for liquor.
"Here's my Jean's health in the siller lipt tassie." *Scots Song.*

Tauld, or *tald.* Told.
"I trow anither tale she tauld." *Scots Song.*

Taupie. A foolish, thoughtless young person.
"Porrige," quoth Hab, "ye senseless taupie."
Ramsay.

Tauted, or *Tautie.* Matted together (spoken of hair and wool).
"He had an ill faur't tautie face."
Tannahill.

Tawie. That allows itself peaceably to be handled (spoken of a cow, horse, &c.).
"He fund when a fiel' he was tawie an' tame."
Picken.

Teat. A small quantity.
"And we'll get teats o' woo." *Scots Song.*

Tedding. Spreading after the mower.

Teethless bawtie. Toothless cur.
"When our dog Bawtie barks, fast to the door I rin." *Scots Song.*

Teethless gab. A mouth wanting the teeth, an expression of scorn.
"While ae gab's teething, anither's growing teethless." *Scots Proverb.*

Ten-hours-bite. A slight feed to the horse while in the yoke in the forenoon.
"Or dealing through amang the naigs,
Their ten-hours-bite." *Burns.*

Tent. A field pulpit, heed, caution; to take heed.
"Dawnus, son Turnus, in the nynte tak tent."
G. Douglas.

Tentie. Heedful, cautious.
"Be wyse and tentie in thy governing."
Maitland Poems.

Tentless. Heedless, careless.
"She that fa's owre a strae 's a tentless taupie."
Scots Proverb.

Teugh. Tough.
"Wi' aureate leuis, and flexibil twistis teuch."
Douglas.

Thack. Thatch; *thack an' rape*, clothing and necessaries; alluding to the covering of a corn rick.
"Some grathis first the thack and rufe of tree."
Douglas.

Thae, thir. These.

Thairms. Small guts, fiddle strings.
"He that has a wide thairm has never a lang arm."
"For while I kittle hair on thairms." *Burns.*

Thankit. Thanked.
"He first said bethankit an' syne he drank it."
Scots Proverb.

Theekit. Thatch'd.
"With lede the south yele thekyd alsua."
Wyntown.

Thegither. Together.
"Gin we be seen thegither in the mirk."
Ross.

Themsel'. Themselves.
"Them that tent nae themsel' will tent nae body else." *Scots Proverb.*

Thick. Intimate, familiar.
"Nae twa were ever seen mair thick."
Davidson.

Thigger. Crowding, make a noise; a seeker of alms.
"Thiggers are those who beg in a genteel way."
Mactaggart.

Thir. These.
"To thir twa wardanys athis swar." *Barbour.*

Thirl, thirled. To thrill, thrilled, vibrated.
"An elbuck dirle will lang play thirl."
Scots Proverb.

Thole. To suffer, to endure.
"Quhat danger is he suld thole on land and see."
Douglas.

Thowe. A thaw, to thaw.
"Dighted his face, his handies thow'd."
G. Douglas.

Thowless. Slack, lazy.
"He was thowless and had in wown."
Wyntown.

Thrang. Throng, busy, a crowd.
"A thoughtless bodie's aye thrang."
Scots Proverb.

Thrapple. Throat, windpipe.
"Till thropil and wesand gade in two."
Barbour.

Thraw. To sprain, to twist, to contradict.
"Thraw the wand while it's green."
Scots Proverb.

Thrawin'. Twisting, &c.
"Alecto hir thrawin visage did away."
Gawin Douglas.

Thrawn. Sprained, twisted, contradicted, contradiction.
"Thraw the widdie whan the wood's green."
Scots Proverb.

Threap. To maintain by dint of assertion.
"'Bout once threap when he and I fell out."
Ross.

Threshin'. Thrashing; *threshin'-tree*, a flail.

Threteen. Thirteen.

Thristle. Thistle.
"Bot thrissil, nettil, brier, and thorne."
Lyndsay.

Through. To go on with, to make out.
"Hey ca' through ca' through." *Scots Song.*

Throu'ther. Pell-mell, confusedly (through-ither).
"And see throwither warpled were that she."
Ross.

Thrum. Sound of a spinning wheel in motion, the thread remaining at the end of a web.
"He's no gude weaver that leaves lang thrums."
Scots Proverb.

Thud. To make a loud intermittent noise.
"Throw cluds so, he thuds so." *Montgomery.*

Thummart. Foumart, pole-cat.
"May the foumart lay his crawin."
Scots Song.

Thumpit. Thumped.
"When pulpit thumpers did express."
Meston.

Thysel'. Thyself.
"Mind thysel'—the warld will mind the lave."
Scots Proverb.

Till't. To it.
"Till't they gade ye see on a braw simmer morning." *Scott.*

Timmer. Timber.
"Timmeris for helmis war the tane."
Barbour.

Tine, or *tyne.* To lose; *tint*, lost; *tint the gate*, lost the way.
"Micht he do ocht but tyne him as it was."
Blind Harry.

Tinkler. A tinker.
"It canna be warse that's no worth a tinkler's curse." *Scots Proverb.*

Tip. A ram.
"Young Colin plodded wi' his strayed tips."
Davidson.

Tippence. Two-pence, money.
"Wae to him that lippens to others for tippence."
Scots Proverb.

Tirl, tirlin', tirlet. To make a slight noise, to uncover; uncovering.
"When the wind blaws loud and tirls our strae." *Scots Song.*
"And aff his coat they tirlet by the croun."
Scots Poem.

Tither. The other.
"An' the tae fat boutcher fryed the tither."
Jacobite Relics.

Tittle, tittlin'. To whisper, to prate idly; whispering.
"My old and great acquaintances at the court of France tittled in the Queen's ear." *Melvil.*
"Here sits a raw o' tittlin jades." *Burns.*

Tocher. Marriage portion; *tocher bands,* marriage bonds.
"She need na mind a clochar wha has a rich tocher." *Scots Proverb.*

Tod. A fox. "*Tod i' the fauld,*" fox in the fold.
"Birds hae their nests, and tods hae thair den." *Lyndsay.*

Toddle, toddlin'. To totter, like the walk of a child;—*toddlen-dow,* toddlen dove.
"Toddling burns that smoothly play." *Fergusson.*

Too-fa'. "Too fa' o' the nicht," when twilight darkens into night; a building added, a lean-to.

Toom. Empty.
"Of toom dominion on the plenteous main." *Ramsay.*

Toop. A ram.
"My poor toop lamb, my son an' heir." *Burns.*

Toss. A toast.
"An' a' forbye my bonnie sel',
The toss o' Ecclefechan."

Tosie. Warm and ruddy with warmth, good-looking, intoxicating.
"And brought them wealth of meat and tosie drink." *Hamilton.*

Toun. A hamlet, a farm house.
"Will ye ca' in by our toun, as ye gae to the faul.'" *Scots Song.*

Tout. The blast of a horn or trumpet, to blow a horn or trumpet.
"O lady, I heard a wee horn tout." *Old Ballad.*

Touzles, touzling. Romping; ruffling the clothes.
"Whilk touzles a' their tap, and gars them shak wi' fear." *Fergusson.*

Tow. A rope.
"His towes I find hae been sae fine." *Scots Poem.*

Towmond. A twelvemonth.
"To this towmond I'se indent." *Ramsay.*

Towzie. Rough, shaggy.
"He's an auld tawtie touzie beast." *Scots Song.*

Toy. A very old fashion of female head-dress.
"My grannie's joy is her grannie's toy." *Scots Saying.*

Toyte. To totter like old age.
"He's auld and feckless, an' a' he dow do is to toyte about." *Scots Song.*

Trams. *Barrow-trams,* the handles of a barrow.
"We'll batter it wi' a barrow tram." *Dunbar.*

Transmugrified. Transmigrated, metamorphosed.
"It has undergone a great transmogrification." *Galt.*

Trashtrie. Trash, rubbish.
"Wi' sauce, ragouts, and such like trashtrie." *Burns.*

Trews. Trousers.

Trickie. Full of tricks.
"A trickie chap's easiest tricket." *Scots Saying.*

Trig. Spruce, neat.
"Full taicht and trig socht blet and to their dammes." *Douglas.*

Trimly. Cleverly, excellently, in a seemly manner.
"An trimly other tryme conceits." *Scots Poem.*

Trinle, trintle. The wheel of a barrow, to roll.
"An' my auld mither burnt the trinle." *Burns.*

Trinklin. Trickling.
"Lyke to the trinklin black stems of pik." *G. Douglas.*

Troggers, troggin. Wandering merchants, goods to truck or dispose of.
"The second are those called troggers, who carry on a species of traffic." *Sinclair.*

Trow. To believe, to trust to.
"And gif that ye will trow to me." *Barbour.*

Trowth. Truth, a petty oath.
"And trowth had in swylk fantasie." *Wyntown.*

Tryste, trysts. To make an appointment; appointments, love meetings, cattle shows.
"Was at that tryste that ilke day." *Wyntown.*

Try't. Tried.

Tumbler-wheels. The wheels of a kind of low cart.
"She can digest the wheels o' tumbler cars like Willie Stalker's mare." *Scots Saying.*

Tug. Raw hide, of which in old time plough traces were frequently made.

Tug or *tow.* Either in leather or rope.
"As e'er in tug or tow was traced." *Burns.*

Tulzie. A quarrel, to quarrel, to fight.
"Sevin' sum that the tulzie maid." *K. James.*

Twa. Two; *twa-fauld,* two fold.
"They made a paction 'tween them twa." *K. James V.*

Twa three. A few.
"In twa three words I'll gie ye my opinion." *Scots Poem.*

Twad. It would.

Twal. Twelve; *twal pennie worth,* a small quantity, a pennyworth.—N. B. One penny English is twelve pence Scotch.
"In twal year throw his douchty dede." *Barbour.*

Twin. To part.
"He'll no twin wi' his gear." *Old Ballad.*

Twistle. Twisting, the art of making a rope.
"I'll twissle yere thrapple in a jiffy." *Scots Story.*

Tyke. A dog.
"Thocht he dow not to leid a tyk." *Dunbar.*

Tysday. Tuesday.
"Saw ye ought o' the rinaway bride
Should been married on tysday 'teen." *Scots Song.*

U

Unback'd filly. A young mare hitherto unsaddled.
"But take it like the unbacked filly,
Proud o' her speed." *Burns.*

Unco. Strange, uncouth, very, very great, prodigious.
"Ye've lain in an unco bed, and wi' an unco man." *Scots Song.*

Uncos. News.
"Sae tell's the uncos that ye've heard or seen." *Morison.*

Unfauld. Unfold.
"The news grow cauld that slow tongues unfauld." *Scots Proverb.*

Unkenn'd. Unknown.
"An unkenn'd sea has ay an unkenn'd shore." *Scots Proverb.*

Unsicker. Uncertain, wavering, unsecure.
"Unsicker, unstable, quo' the wave to the cable." *Scots Proverb.*

Unskaithed. Undamaged, unhurt.

Upo'. Upon.

Unweeting. Unwittingly, unknowing.

Urchin. A hedge-hog.

V

Vap'rin. Vapouring.
"In wrath she was sae vap'rin." *Burns.*

Vauntie. Joyous, delight which cannot contain itself.
"'Tis daffin to be vaunty." *Old Song.*

Vera. Very.
"Other fowk are well faured, but ye're no sae vera." *Scots Saying.*

Virl. A ring round a column, &c
"Of plumb-tree made, with ivory virles round." *Ramsay.*

Vogie. Vain.
"And vogie that I ca' my ain." *Ross.*

W

Wa'. Wall; *wa's,* walls.
"The lady look'd over the castle wa',
Cried wha maks a' this din?" *Scots Ballad.*

Wabster. A weaver.
"Find me ane wabster that is leill."
Lyndsay.

Wad. Would, to bet, a bet, a pledge.

Wadna. Would not.
"What writer wadna gang as far as
He could for bread."
Fergusson.

Wadset. Land on which money is lent; a mortgage.
"An' what's his lairdship; a mere wadset, no worth redeeming."

Wae. Woe; *waefu'*, sorrowful, wailing.
"It was wae-days wi' Charlie." *Scots Song.*

Waefu'-woodie. Hangman's rope.
"But weary-fa' the waefu'-woodie." *Burns.*

Waesucks! Wae's me! Alas! O the pity!
"Some that hae least to dree are loudest wi' wae's me!" *Scots Proverb.*

Wa'-flower. Wall-flower.
"Ye may fin' the smell o' the wa'-flower for three miles frae the abbey tap when the win's in the west." *Scots Story.*

Waft. Woof; the cross thread that goes from the shuttle through the web.
"True love's the waft o' life, but it whiles comes through a sorrowfu' shuttle."
Scots Saying.

Waifs an' crocks. Stray sheep and old ewes, past breeding.
"And sittin down like sarye crokkis."
Dunbar.

Wair. To lay out, to expend.
"Wi' ten pund Scots, on sarkin to ware."
Scots Song.

Wale, wal'd. Choice, to choose; chosen.
"The wale o' our lasses is moorland Meg."
Scots Song.

Walie. Ample, large, jolly, also an interjection of distress.
"O waly, waly, up the bank." *Scots Song.*

Wame, wamefu'. The belly; a belly-full.
"A rotten sod across his wame." *Hogg.*
"Let ne'er a wamefu' be a missing."
A. Scott.

Wanchansie. Unlucky.
"Wi' creels wanchansie heap'd wi' bread."
Fergusson.

Wanrest, wanrestfu'. Restless, unrestful.
"Quo' she, I wis I could your wanrest ken."
Ross.

Wark. Work.
"Rise early to their wark." *Fergusson.*

Wark-lume. A tool to work with.
"An' cause she soon that wark-lume quit."
Scots Poem.

Warld's worm. A miser.
"Some ca' him Haud-the-grip, and ithers the Warld's worm." *Scots Story.*

Warl' or *warld.* World.
"Its ill to quarrel wi' a misrid warl'."

Warlock. A wizard; *Warlock-knowe*, a knoll where warlocks once held tryste.
"Ye'll neither die for yere wit, nor be drowned for a warlock."
Scots Proverb.

Warly. Worldly, eager in amassing wealth.
"The warldly race may riches chase."
Burns.

Warran'. A warrant, to warrant.
"Indeed, quo' she, I'se warran'."
Scots Song.

Warsle, warstle, warsl'd, or *warstl'd.* Wrestle, wrestling, struggling; wrestled.
"Quha with this warld dois warsell and stryfe." *Dunbar.*
"We've foughten teugh and warsled sair."
Scots Song.

Warst. Worst.

Wastrie. Prodigality.
"A house in a hastrie is downright wastrie."
Scots Proverb.

Wat. Wet; *I wat—I wot*—I know.
"After their yokin—I wat weel." *Fergusson.*

Wat. A man's upper dress; a sort of mantle.
"To make a wat to Johnnie of." *Burns.*

Water brose. Brose made of meal and water simply, without the addition of milk, butter, &c.
"Them that likes na water brose, will scunner at cauld steerie." *Scots Proverb.*

Wattle. A twig, a wand.
"He cut a wand and gae her a wattlin."
Scots Story.

Wauble. To swing, to reel.
"He's grown sae wauf he scarce can wauble."
Scots Saying.

Waught. Draught.

Waukin. Waking, watching.
"Yet weel I like to meet her
At the wauking of the fauld." *Ramsay.*

Waukit. Thickened as fullers do cloth.
"Done, quo' Pate, and syne his erles
Nailed the dysters wauket loof."
A. Wilson.

Waukrife. Not apt to sleep.
"Thou art a gay and kindlie quean,
But thou hast a waukrife minnie."
Scots Song.

Waur, waur't. Worse, worsted.
"And what the waur am I." *Old Song.*
"Wad aiblins waur't thee at a brattle." *Burns.*

Wean. A child.
"Ilka year a dainty wean." *Macneill.*

Wearie, or *weary. Mony a weary body,* many a toilsome person.

Weary-widdle. Toilsome contest of life.
"This warl's a widdle, as weel as a riddle."
Scots Proverb.

Weason. Weasand, windpipe.
"Weet your weason, or else it will geeson."
Scots Saying.

Weavin' the stocking. To knit stockings. See *Stockin'.—Throwing the stockin'.*
"To ca' the crack an' weave our stockin'."
Burns

Weeder-clips. Instrument for removing weeds.
"I turned the weeder-clips aside." *Burns.*

Wee. Little; *wee things*, little ones; *wee bits*, a small matter.
"Oh! wee, wee man, but ye be strang."
Scots Ballad

Weel. Well; *weelfare*, welfare.
"They're weel guidet that God guides."
Scots Proverb

Weet. Rain, wetness; to wet.
"Logan water's wide and deep,
And I am laith to weet my feet." *Scots Song.*

Weird. Fate.

We'se. We shall.
"We'se a' be fu' when the corn's i' the mow."
Scots Song

Wha, whase, wha's. Who, whose, who's.
"Ye wha hae sung o' Hallow fair."
Fergusson.

Whaizle. To wheeze.
"Ye fuff and wheazle, like a hunted weasel."
Scots Proverb.

Whalpit. Whelped.

Whang. A leathern thong, a piece of cheese, bread, &c.
"Cut frae the new cheese a whang." *James V.*

Whare. Where. *Whare'er*, where'er.
"Whare will our gude-man lie?" *Scots Song.*

What reck. Nevertheless.
"And yet what reck he at Quebec." *Burns.*

Wheep. To fly nimbly, to jerk; *penny-wheep*, small beer.
"He hated penny-wheep and water."
Scots Rhyme.

Whid. The motion of a hare running, but not frightened: a lie.
"He'll tell you a whid aboon what he's bid."
Scots Saying.

Whidden. Running as a hare, or coney.
"The linnet's flittin frae cowe to cowe,
The hare is whidden frae knowe to knowe."
Scots Song.

Whigmeleeries. Whims, fancies, crotchets.

Whilk. Which.
"Than whilk I trow." *Fergusson.*

Whingin'. Crying, complaining, fretting.
"Fears aye pingin and sorrows aye whingin."
Scots Saying.

Whirligigums. Useless ornaments, trifling appendages. The capitals which surmount the columns on the new bridge of Ayr.

Whissle. A whistle, to whistle.
"The shrill sound of a thin sword-blade in the act of striking."

Whisht. Silence; *to hold one's whisht*, to be silent.
"Whisht, gude wife, is this a day to be singing your ranting fule sangs in." *Scott.*

Whisk; whisket. To sweep—to lash.
"He whisket it cross my lips I trow,
Which makes them baith sae mealy."
Scots Song.

Whiskin' beard. A beard like the whiskers of a cat.
"A whiskin beard about her mou." *Burns.*

Whitter. A hearty draught of liquor.
"He's na flitter while the cog yields a whitter."
Scots Saying.

Whittle. A knife.
"Pits ilk chiel's whittle i' the pye."
Fergusson.

Whunstane. A whinstone.
"Be to the poor like ony whunstone." *Burns.*

Whyles. Whiles, sometimes.

Wi'. With.
"How 's a' wi' ye, my sonsie dame."
Scots Song.

Wick. To strike a stone in an oblique direction—a term in curling.
"Guard this in wick, else its a' day with the dinner and drink."
Directions in Curling.

Wicker. Willow (the smaller sort).

Widdifu. Twisted like a withy—one who merits hanging.
"Vain widdifou out of thy wit gane wild."
Dunbar.

Wiel. A small whirlpool.
"An' in the wiel she will drown me."
Old Ballad.

Wifie-wifikie. A diminutive, or endearing name, for wife.
"There was a wee bit wifiekie, and she gaed to the fair." *Geddes.*

Wight. Stout—enduring.
"A nobell knight,
Stout and manly, bauld and wycht."
Wyntown.

Willyart-glower. A bewildered, dismayed stare.
"Whiles wandering, whiles dandering,
Like royd and willyart rais." *Burel.*

Wimple, wimplet. To meander—meandered—to enfold.
"Wimplit and busket in ane bluidy bend."
G. Douglas.

Wimplin'. Waving—meandering.
"Where wimpling waters make their way."
Ramsay.

Win', win't, wind. To wind, to winnow; winded, as a bottom of yarn.
"Weel win corn should be housed ere the morn." *Scots Proverb.*

Win, wons. Live, dwells.
"Where do ye win, gin ane may speer."
Fergusson.

Winnin'-thread. Putting thread into hanks.
"Prudence should be winning when thrift is spinning." *Scots Saying.*

Winna. Will not.
"In troth I winna steer ye." *Scots Song.*

Winnock. A window.
"May gain a place in Fame's high winnock."
Tannahill.

Winsome. Hearty, vaunted, gay.
"Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow."
Hamilton.

Wintle. A staggering motion; to stagger, to reel.
"He'll wintle in a widdie as sure as I'm i' the body." *Scots Saying.*

Wiss. To wish.
"There was nae need o' her to wis to pit me daft." *Galt.*

Withouten. Without.

Wizened. Hide-bound, dried, shrunk.
"He's wizened, but gere geisond." That is, he is dry, but you are drier.

Winze. A curse, or imprecation.
"He loot a winze and drew a straik." *Burns.*

Wonner. A wonder, a contemptuous appellation.
"Some are unlo'esome enough, but ye're a warl's wonner."

Woo'. Wool.
"Simmer it is coming in an we'll get teats o' woo'." *Scots Song.*

Woo. To court, to make love to.
"Wooing at her, pu'in' at her." *Scots Song.*

Woodie. A rope; more properly, one of withs or willows.
"He was missed by the water, but caught by the woodie." *Scots Proverb.*

Wooer-babs. The garter knitted below the knee with a couple of loops.

Wordy. Worthy.
"He's weel wordy o' her, or the best o' a' her kin." *Scots Song.*

Worset. Worsted.
"Her braw new worset apron." *Burns.*

Wow. An exclamation of pleasure or wonder.

Wrack. To teaze, to vex.
"I'll teaze him an' wrack him until I heart break him." *Burns.*

Wud. Wild, mad; *wud-mad*, distracted.
"Ance wud, and aye waur." *Scots Proverb.*

Wumble. A wimble.
"To do sic a darke is like boring wi' a fipless wumble." *Scots Saying.*

Wraith. A spirit, a ghost, an apparition exactly like a living person, whose appearance is said to forebode the person's approaching death; also wrath.
"And in her sleep loud wraith in every place."
Douglas.

Wrang. Wrong, to wrong.
"With rycht or wrang it hav wald thae."
Barbour.

Wreeth. A drifted heap of snow.
"Ance she lay a week or langer,
Underneath a wreeth o' snaw." *Skinner.*

Wyle. To beguile.

Wyliecoat. A flannel vest.
"The bride in wylie coat sae braw,
Sat on her nether en'." *Ramsay.*

Wyte. Blame, to blame.
"Had I the wyte she bade me." *Scots Song*

Y

Ye. This pronoun is frequently used for thou.

Year. Is used both for singular and plural years.

Yearlings. Born in the same year, coevals.
"Near yearlins wi' the sun your God."
Rumsay.

Yearns. Longs much.
"He's aye in a yearn, yearn, or a girn, girn."
Scots Saying.

Yell. Barren, that gives no milk.
"A yell sow was never gude to grices."
Scots Proverb.

Yerk, Yerkit. To lash, to jerk, jerket, lashed.
"If I canna sew, quoth Wat, I can yerk."
Scott.

Yestreen. Yesternight.
"Yestreen I saw the new moon
Wi' the auld moon in her arm."
Scots Ballad.

Yett. A gate; such as is usually at the entrance into a farm-yard, or field.
"Thai wist not weill at what yett he ingaid."
Blind Harry.

Yeuks. Itches.
"I'll gar ye scart where it disna yeuk."
Scots Saying.

Yill. Ale.
"Aye blithely, sir, an' drink his health too, when the yills gude." *Scott.*

Yin. One.
"Happy we've been, yin and a'." *Burns.*

Yird, yirded. Earth, earthed; buried.
"Into great pitts eardet were." *Barbour.*

Yokin'. Yoking.
"Or haud the yokin' o' a plough."
Jacobite Relics.

Yont, ayont. Beyond.
"The auld wife ayont the fire." *Ross.*

Yirr. Lively.
"You yirr and yowl, you bark, but dare na bite."
Scots Saying.

Yowe. An ewe.

Yowie. Diminutive of Yowe.
"The ewie an' the crookit horn,
Sic a ewie ne'er was born." *Skinner.*

Yule. Christmas.
"And held his yhule in Aberdeen." *Wynton.*

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